

Pocket Series
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BEADLE'S

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POCKET NOVELS

The Silent Slayer.



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THE SILENT SLAYER:

OR,

THE MAID OF MONTREAL.

BY W. J. HAMILTON,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING POCKET NOVELS:

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THE
SILENT SLAYER.

CHAPTER I.

THE SILENT SLAYER.

"RUN for your life!" were the words which rung like a trumpet through the depths of the forest. As the voice was heard, the bushes parted suddenly, and two white men dashed into a little opening at full speed. All about them hung the dense woods, with scarcely a glimpse of light through the foliage. A deep shadow rested on every side. The two men darted through the opening, and were gone like visions. So sudden was their entrance and departure that the leaves had not ceased to quiver on one side, before they were gone from sight on the other.

The cause of their hasty flight soon became apparent. A series of hideous yells, baffling description, burst from the throats of a score of warriors. A moment after, dark, savage forms crossed the open space, in close pursuit.

Whirling their glittering hatchets in the air, and pealing out their terrible war-cry, they sprung on. The white men were running for life, and, close in their rear, they could hear the footsteps of their foes.

The first of the two was a young man in the green uniform of a provincial ensign. The other wore a nondescript dress, half soldier, half scout, and was evidently a native of the "Gem of the Sea." Both were heavily armed, each carrying the dreaded rifle, whose use was known to but few of the English troops of that period. The young ensign also wore pistols and a rapier. Both were true foresters, the haughty courage of the younger serving admirably as a foil for the careless bravery of the Irishman.

"Och, thin, the devil fly away wid you spalpeens," cried

the latter, panting. "Let's turn on thim, Masther Wilton. Sure, an' it's betther to die wid a bit av breath in the body, than to rin yerself out av wind, an' thin turn about an' take half a dozen balls in yer carcass. Bad cess til thim."

"We will turn when forced to do so," replied the other. "Let us save ourselves if we can. The dispatches I have are of the utmost importance to the king's cause. The French are ready to break the truce. Run on."

"Run, is it? The devil carry ye, and phat d'ye call this? Ain't *this* running? I sh'u'd think so, bad scran til it, an' the likes av it."

"Don't waste words. On, for *your* life, and mine."

The Irishman was silent now. Throwing out his chest and inflating his lungs, he kept on by the side of his companion. But, close upon their track, like wolves upon the trail of the wounded buffalo, came the tread of the Indians. Silent, tireless, relentless as death, they realized their power and prowess well. Many of them could have run from morning until night, showing but slight signs of fatigue. They knew the country well. On nearly every mile of ground they had fought the white man, the deer, and the panther. No man understood their relentless natures better than Wilton Mowbray, the young ensign. He had suffered at their hands before now. He knew that their stern creed spared none who fell into their power, and he determined to die bravely, if it must be, but never to submit to become their prisoner.

"We must turn upon them," he cried. "This is a good place. Is your rifle ready?"

The Irishman nodded; his face was flushed, but he showed no signs of flinching. The spot where they halted was in a narrow pass between two rocky bluffs, commanding a view of the open space which they had just crossed, through which their enemies must come in order to reach their prey.

"Cheerily, Mick," said the young man. "They can't be very many. Who knows but we may outwit them yet? At any rate, if they take us it must be by fighting, and nothing less. I will see to that."

"I'll stand by ye, me lad," said Mick, stoutly. "It shall niver be said that Mick O'Toole forsook his ould masther an' fri'nd in the hour av trial. There's wan av thim."

The young ensign raised his rifle to his shoulder, just as a savage warrior bounded from cover. Crack! The Indian threw up his arms, uttered a wild yell, and fell dead in his tracks. As he did so, another darted from the woods, in time to receive the contents of O'Toole's rifle. Though not quite killed, he was disabled from any further service for years to come. The sudden check took the pursuers by surprise, and they recoiled from the dangerous pass. But, as they did so, a deep, stern voice ordered an advance. As the order came, a dozen savages rushed from the thicket, and hurried toward the pass. Before they reached it, those fearful rifles had again cracked, and with each shot, human souls had gone to judgment.

The Indians were now too near to permit the whites to use their rifles again. Throwing these weapons behind them, the defenders of the pass drew their knives, while Wilton took a long-barreled pistol in his right hand. The foremost savage had arrived within twenty feet of the pass, when the pistol exploded. The warrior was in the act of taking a forward step, when the ball struck him on the crown of the head, cutting off a portion of his head-dress and flinging him to the ground as quickly as if he had been struck down by a bludgeon. Wilton snatched the other pistol from his belt, and aimed at the next warrior. Trained from boyhood to shoot with the pistol and rifle, he was sure of his aim at that distance, and sought to disable rather than kill the Indian, even though the savage sought his life. The ball broke the leg just above the ankle, and the Indian fell with a hollow groan. Six warriors now opposed them, armed with knife and hatchet. But, Indians are rarely determined fighters, hand to hand, and they hesitated.

In the place where the two men stood, their flanks were guarded by the heavy bluffs, and the attack must come from the front. Wilton took advantage of this hesitation to load his pistols.

"Let the red warriors listen," he said, addressing them in French, which he knew many of the Canadian Indians could speak. "Can any of you understand what I am saying?"

One of the warriors answered :

"I am Rolling Thunder, a warrior of the St. Regis. What will the white chief say?"

"Why do my red brothers seek my life? Are they not friends to their French father at Montreal?"

"My brother is right: we are indeed friends to our father at Montreal. *That* is the reason we seek the Yengee."

"What have I done?"

"My brother is a snake in the grass; he has gone among the French at Montreal and at Quebec, and he has learned many things which it is not just that he should know. Rolling Thunder is a great chief; he will take you, liar of the Yengees, and burn you with fire."

"The warrior speaks with a long tongue, and it is easy to see that his arms are short. Does the Indian know my name? If he does not, I will speak it. I am the Silent Slayer!"

A hush fell upon the Indians at the name; then they were heard to mutter among themselves. They knew the name well. For two years it had been a living terror to them. They knew him, though young, to be a daring scout, a man of the utmost bravery, a trusty guide, and an officer in whom the men had confidence. He scouted for pleasure, not for gain. Early left to himself, he had no other object in life. His parents had died in an Indian massacre, and he alone had been left. He could truly say, "There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature." Yet, his great loss had not made him vindictive. He did not confound the innocent with the guilty; but when he fought the Indians, he never struck without thinking of his slain friends.

He had taken to the woods. In time he learned to love them. In their deep recesses, in times of peace, with his faithful servant and friend, Mick O'Toole, he had passed most of his time hunting, fishing, and boating. But, whenever the trumpet of war sounded, he was the first to spring to arms. The Government knew his value, and he was the man to send in advance to the enemy's country, when on the verge of breaking a truce, to study out their probable plans. Through his exploits and adventures, he became well known to the Indians, who had not been aware of whom they had been in phase until this moment.

"Silent Slayer," said Rolling Thunder, again stepping to

the front, "the hearts of the warriors are very glad. It is always pleasant to a St. Regis to see the face of a brave man. My brother is *very* brave; but he must give himself up."

"Are the English at war with the French?" demanded Wilton.

"My brother must not ask questions; he has done enough. Two of our warriors are dead; two more will never tread the war-path. The St. Regis have reason enough to destroy the Silent Slayer."

"The tongue of Rolling Thunder is getting *very* long," said Wilton, in a taunting tone. "If he means to take the Silent Slayer, why does he not come? The *Silent Slayer* is here."

As he said this, the Indians started back in fear. He lifted his hand. As he did so, all fled but Rolling Thunder, leaving him standing alone, immediately in front of the narrow pass.

"Rolling Thunder," said the young man, in a solemn tone, "you should not have told me your name. You are one of the men I have sought for two years. It was you, and no other, who killed my father. I knew your name; you must die."

While speaking, he had moved out of the pass and stood by the side of the Indian, who neither moved nor spoke, though evidently in deadly fear.

"You must remember that two years ago you came with a French party upon a settlement on the Mohawk. You led the Indians. A Frenchman, whose name I could never learn, led the French. Tell me his name."

The Indian shook his head.

"Tell me his name; you have but a moment to live—a single moment. Do a good deed before you die."

"I will not," said Rolling Thunder. "Let the white man do his worst."

"My father and mother were killed that day. I am sworn to spend my life in looking for the men who killed them. You are one of these. Who is the other? I ask it before you die."

"Rolling Thunder can hear the voice of the Manitou call. He is ready to die. Let the white man raise his hand and

strike the blow. The warrior will go to the happy hunting-grounds of his fathers. He will be content."

Wilton lifted his hand; Rolling Thunder folded his arms and looked him in the face with a calm smile. Villain though he was, Wilton could not but admire his noble bearing, and his manner of meeting death.

"Why does the Silent Slayer stay his hand?" asked the chief. "Let him strike."

"Tell me the name of the Frenchman, and you shall go free."

"I am not a dog; I will not tell his name. If you knew it, it would make you tremble."

"You refuse, then?"

"Yes."

Again Wilton raised his weapon. As he did so, some one in the bushes fired at him with an unsteady aim. The ball flew wide of its mark, and buried itself between the shoulders of the Indian. He looked fixedly for a moment in the face of Wilton, and then, with a smile of derision frozen on his set lip, he sunk dead at his feet; the hand of his own friend had slain him. Wilton, much as he had longed to meet this man, was thankful that his had not been the hand to lay him low.

"Be off now!" shouted Mick. "I've got me second wind."

They dashed away again, and for nearly a mile ran in silence, while, on every hand, the woods resounded with cries of disappointed vengeance. These cries were soon changed, as a fresh body of the savages reached the spot where lay the corpse of Rolling Thunder.

"Hark!" said Wilton, pausing in his onward course. "Do you hear that? A pleasant sound, is it not? That is the death-yell over the body of the chief. Woe to us now if we fall alive into their hands."

"Af I have a word to say on the subject," said Mick, "I won't l'ave them catch me, at all, at all. Sure, we've med the thaves sick, so fur."

"We have indeed done well. A short time since, our lives would not have been worth a moment's purchase. Now we are comparatively safe. I flatter myself that my name will make them a little cautious."

"They fear ye like the devil, Masther Wilton. Ah, the bla'-guards! hark til them now! How I w'u'd like to cram the whole length of me ramrod down the dirthy throat av the black baste yellin' now."

"Come on," said Wilton, briefly; "we are not yet safe."

Their course now lay through a country broken into ridges, covered by low growths of pine and spruce, in clumps, with here and there a large opening. As they came on, they caught the glimmer of water through the dense foliage.

"The lake!" cried Wilton. "Now, in five minutes more, I can say that we are secure, if we can find the canoe. Oh, I hope it is safe. Jake Dowdle told me where he hid it, and he is never a man to do things by halves. Whatever he does is well done. Ah-ha! there is Champlain in full view."

As he spoke, they pushed aside the thick branches, and came upon the shore of the lake, which shone before them like a burnished shield. Not a breath stirred the placid surface. There it lay, a perfect picture of nature's handiwork, faultless as only the work of God can be. The great trees on the bank cast long, dark shadows on the limpid surface. Far down in those translucent depths, where the pickerel and bass lurked, they could see the white stones gleaming. Numerous islands gemmed the surface, crowned by verdant groves of stately trees. Flocks of aquatic birds rose at their approach, and sailed away through the pleasant air. But, though lovers of nature in her various forms, the men had no time to gaze on its beauties now.

"Step into the water," said Wilton. "We can break the trail. I defy them to find out whether we go up or down. Step on the stones."

They hurried up the lake, sometimes under the overhanging banks, sometimes close to the gravelly shore, for about half a mile. The clamor behind them had begun to spread, as if the pursuers had become confused and had scattered in search of the trail. Wilton now stepped out of the water, and carefully lifting a mass of hanging vines which drooped over the face of the bluff, he disclosed a small opening into which he signaled his companion to enter. The Irishman obeyed without a word, and Wilton followed. Their lurking-place was merely a small cavity in the face of the rock, deep

enough to hold them readily, but not rising to the dimensions of a cave. By making a small opening in the leaves, they could see up or down the lake. Lying prostrate on the rock, Wilton parted the leaves and looked out. Two savages had come round a point about two hundred yards away, and were looking in their direction, not as if seeing any thing of them, but merely in the hope that they might be in sight. The two hidden men were silent as death.

The Indians came on, stopping now and then to listen. They were young warriors, and anxious for distinction. If they could be the means of the capture of the Silent Slayer, they would be contented with the glory. Still, though valorous, they also were prudent youth, and knew that, in a personal conflict, they would fare badly in the hands of two such noted men as the Silent Slayer and the Redhead, by which name the honest Irishman was known. For, if the truth must be told, the hair of Mick O'Toole was of a sanguine hue, like unto blood.

The two warriors halted about twenty feet from the place where the men lay, and began a conversation which we translate into English :

"Sleep-by-Day," said one, addressing his friend, "did you look upon the face of the Silent Slayer, who is like unto the death which walks in the dark?"

"Bend-the-Bow says well," said the other. "I looked upon the face of the Silent Slayer, and it was like unto the cloud which mutters in the sky. A warrior is but dust before him. His ways are terrible. If we take him, we shall be chiefs among the Regis."

"But," said the other, promptly, "if the Silent Slayer should kill us, what then?"

"We be dead!" replied Sleep-by-Day, coolly.

"I am going to astonish those fellows," whispered Wilton. "Wait a moment. Let them talk on."

"How will he kill us?" asked Bend-the-Bow.

"Got a gun so long," said Sleep-by-Day, extending his arms. "Very long gun. No powder in him, no wad; nothing but ball. Hold it out; no noise; you dead."

"We go back now," said Bend-the-Bow. "No good to stay here. Git killed if we do. No stay."

"Must go on," said the other, "else warriors laugh. Bad to have warriors laugh at us."

Wilton had taken something out of a long pocket in his hunting-coat, worked at it a moment, and then pointed it out through the leaves. Immediately Bend-the-Bow dropped on one knee, wounded, and Sleep-by-Day clapped his hand to his own shoulder, as if in sudden pain. The Irishman looked on with a smile. He had long ago ceased to wonder at any thing his master might do, but he had hard work to refrain from a loud laugh at the expressions of pain and disgust upon the faces of the two Indians.

"Told you so!" cried Bend-the-Bow. "What matter now?"

"Something shoot. What?"

"Silent Slayer! You take me on your back. Broke my leg, all for you. *Fool*, you *would* stay here. S'pose you get kill, all good."

"Hurt *bad*," said Sleep-by-Day. "Can't carry you. Try."

Putting his arm about the waist of his unfortunate companion, he partly dragged and partly carried him around the point of land, and out of sight of the spot from which the mysterious bullet had come. There had been no report. By what unseen agency the bullets had been sent, they could not tell.

The moment they were out of sight of the dreaded spot, their yells resounded through the woods. The enemy came at their call. But, when they reached the shore of the lake, they only found new food for anger. There, gasping on the beach, lay two of their best warriors; and out upon the surface of the lake, nearly half a mile from land, lay a small canoe, containing two persons. They saw at a glance that all their efforts had been in vain, and that their enemies, safe from pursuit, were laughing at them. Even if they had a canoe, it was by no means certain that they could overtake the practiced woodmen before night came on; so they gave over the pursuit, and went back to bury their dead.

CHAPTER II.

"BE JABERS IF I DO!"

THE two adventurers had found their canoe safe, and embarked in time to escape the infuriated savages, who were, of course, raving at the loss they had sustained, without being able to inflict any in return. They bent to their paddles, after taking an observation of the shore, shaping their course for an island far out in the lake. As they worked at their paddles, we have time to look at the Silent Slayer, and see what manner of man he is. A young man about twenty-five—very young to have established such a reputation among bordermen as that he possessed. His frame, though below the middle size, was sinewy, and he was straight as an arrow, with a pair of square shoulders and powerful arms; his face was without a beard, smooth as that of a woman, with dark eyes and long brown hair. He was a little inclined to be particular about dress, as most army officers were in his day; his neat green uniform set off his trim figure and handsome face to good advantage.

Mick O'Toole, his companion and serving man, was a stout, thick-set individual, with flaming red hair, and a face whose unapproachable homeliness was only redeemed by the good-natured grin which rarely left it.

"Sure, Masther Wilton," he said, "we got out av that scrape mighty nate. Phat d'ye think?"

"I think as you do. We are lucky fellows that our bones do not lie on yonder shore. Never mind. It is the lot of those who live our dangerous life. I think the danger amply atoned for by the pleasure of doing service for the country."

"Och, the devil take the counthry, aff it comes til *that*," said Mick. "Fur me own silf, I'd never stir a fut to help the counthry, aff it wasn't fur yer own swate silf. Phat do I care fur ould Ireland? Phat have she iver done fur me? Och, mony an' mony's the time I've wished her sunk in the dape say. Ould Ireland forever. Arrah musha, but whin will

the day come when Irishmen can see the ould green flag flyin' above the rid!"

" You Irishmen don't forget, although you have been kept under so long," said Wilton.

" Forgit, is it? Whin Mick O'Toole forgits the ould green sod, an' the woes av her childer, it will be whin they've spread a grass quilt over the head av me, sure. Sure it's mesilf that knows the O'Tooles were the kings in Ireland, before an Englishman put a fut on it, bad scran to thim an' the likes av thim."

" You feel strongly."

" The Irishman looks back toward the ould sod always. No matther where he makes his home, the eyes av him are always turning back to the home he hopes fur. He looks to see the ould green flag wave ag'in from north to south and aist an' wist, in the green isle. Musha, musha, the sights I have seen in Ireland. Don't wonder I don't care much fur England. But, fur that, I don't like Frenchmin nigh so well as they, because you like the English."

They were now nearing the island. There was no sound upon its silent breast. Hardly a bird was to be seen. An oppressive and strange silence fell on all around. Wilton felt a sort of vague uneasiness creep into his frame, such as men feel at times when they pass through a churchyard, or touch the face of a corpse. Mick looked uneasily about him, and laughed nervously. Wilton stopped paddling, and rested on his oar.

" I am ashamed to say that for the first time to-day, I feel nervous," he said. " It is a strange sensation, at the moment of safety. I am far from understanding it."

" It's me that feels as you do, honey," said Mick, passing his hand across his brow. " Niver mind, alanah; the bist av us have times like these. It'll pass away soon."

The prow of the canoe grated on the strand, and shaking off his fears by an effort, Wilton sprung to the shore, and held the bow for his companion to step out. Mick did so, and they dragged the canoe high up on the beach, where the water could not move it, and advanced toward the center of the island. It was not more than three acres in extent, and was covered for the most part by a thick growth of underbrush

beneath tall trees. Near the center grew a single oak, which, by process of age, had become decayed to a great extent, leaving a cavity within the trunk which was large enough to hide the body of a man.

"Here is the place where Major Forsythe promised to leave our orders," said Wilton, plunging his hand into the hollow trunk. He removed it immediately with a look of absolute fear upon his face.

"There is something there," he whispered. "Curse this place; it is taking all the manhood from me. I am a fool. I must find out who is here."

He thrust his hand again into the cavity and seized the object which had alarmed him. As he drew it forth to the light, a low cry of horror broke from him and Mick. It was the dead body of a young man, in the uniform of an officer in the French artillery. Some sharp weapon had pierced his heart. Little blood had flowed, and he had apparently died without a struggle. He looked noble in death, for his was one of those clear-cut, handsome faces which bespeak nobility of nature. His lips were red and full, like a woman's. A dark mustache was just beginning to show itself, and as he lay there in death, with lips just parted, as if asleep, his teeth showed white and even as pearls. A ring, which sparkled upon one of the fingers of his right hand, proved that he had not been killed for gain. Wilton searched his pockets, and found in them a purse, containing forty Louis, a pair of handsome pistols and a stiletto. In the breast-pocket of his coat they found a memorandum-book. Upon the fly-leaf was this inscription :

VAUDELEUR D'ARIGNY,
à Calais,
Capitaine.

There were many entries in the book, over which the young man hastily cast his eye. Notes of beautiful women the young man had seen, of wine-parties, of conquests, and the thousand and one things which are done by idle young men of fortune. He turned to the last pages. We have said Wilton was a good French scholar; he read it easily.

"17th. The colonel has asked Mariot and myself to go out on the trail and see if the enemy are making any demonstrations

for war. If they are, we must forestall them. We have never been behindhand yet, and it would not do to begin now, it seems to me."

"18th. We go to-day. Mariot has been with me making preparations. I am sorry that I can not like him better, for we are of the same blood, though far away. There is something in his face which I can not like, though he is always kind to me. Perhaps it is on Marie's account. I can think of nothing else. I think he loves her. But he shall never marry her. My dear sister must be the wife of a good man. No other will do for her."

"19th. Off on the trail. An Indian is to take us to the head of the lake in a canoe. From that we must shift for ourselves. Mariot is gloomy. He has spoken to Marie and she has refused him. It is like my sister. No, Mariot Dujardin, seek some other bride. Marie D'Arigny can never be yours."

Here the journal abruptly ceased. There was a chain about the neck of the unfortunate young man. Wilton raised it, and saw that it had a small golden locket attached to it. He touched the spring and it opened, showing the face of a fair young French girl, whom no one could mistake for any thing but the sister of that dead man. It was the same face, except with feminine traits. How long Wilton kneeled with that picture in his hand he could not have said. It was a long time, and when he rose he took the chain from the neck of the young man and passed it over his own. He also took the ring and pistols.

"These must go to his sister," he said. "Now, Mick, let us make a grave for this poor boy. I much fear he was slain by treachery."

The soil was soft and easily worked. With their knives and tin cups they scooped out a hollow in the earth, not very deep, to be sure, and there they laid the body of the murdered man to rest, with his cloak wrapped about him, and his sword by his side.

"Rest well, my brave boy," said Wilton. "If I ever meet and know your murderer, God pity him!"

When the last service they could do him was performed, they went back to the tree and searched for dispatches. They found them, at last, thrust into a little crevice in the wood. Their orders were general. To scour the woods in every

direction and find out, if possible, more of the designs of the enemy, unless they had already obtained very important information. In that case, it must be sent to head-quarters.

"Mick," said Wilton, "that shall be your duty. You must go to Schenectady alone."

"And phat will ye do, alanah?"

"I am going to Montreal," said Wilton. "I can not rest until I have given this poor girl information of the death of her brother, and what better place can I go to than to Montreal?"

"The cats take me if I go a fut," said Mick, angrily. "Phat d'ye tak' me fur, at all? W'u'd I l'ave ye to go up into the Frenchers' town, all forby yersilf, an' me safe in the Mohawk counthry? The devil a bit w'u'd I!"

"But, Mick, you don't understand."

"Who w'u'd understand thin? Now look ye here to me. I'm a poor baste av a b'y, I know; but the devil a time w'u'd I do the like av that. I've been with ye mony a year, in good times an' bad times, by lake an' river, by flood an' field, an' whin I l'ave ye to go all the dangerous way til Montreal, all by yersilf, may the cats get me, an' they will."

"But, if I *order* you to do it, Mick," said the other, sternly.

"Thin I'll do phat I haven't done this mony a long year: I'll disobey yer orders. That's swore to."

Mick was wagging his obstinate head to and fro in an angry manner, muttering to himself as he did so.

"You see the orders," expostulated the young man. "One of us must go: you can see that plainly. Then please tell me what we can do unless you go? The interests of the country must not be neglected."

"*That* fer the intherests av the counthry," replied Mick, snapping his fingers. "I tould ye before I didn't care fur it. Niver till me! It's you I care fur, not fur the counthry."

"Have you no patriotism?"

"The devil a bit," replied Mick, in a tone of sturdy independence. "I'll stand by you, ivery time."

"My faithful fellow," said Wilton, suddenly changing his tone, "your kindness touches me more deeply than I can tell you. I feel it in my heart to thank you, but can hardly tell how to begin. You have followed me with unvarying

faith, through all the shifting scenes of the last two years. I will not ask you again to part from me, even for a season, though it would have been for the best."

"Give me them bloody dispatches," roared Mick. "Arrah, it's mortal bad I feel all the time, but duty must be done. Only mind this: how long will ye be gone?"

"I can not tell."

"Which way w'u'd ye come back?"

Wilton mapped out a plan of his line of march on a leaf from his note-book and gave it to him.

"All right; I'll go to Schenectady," he said. "But the minnit yon officers git the dispatches, I folly ye's. D'ye mind that now?"

"You know the rapids in the St. Lawrence near Montreal?" said Wilton.

"Yis."

"And the hole in the rock on the south bank of the river?"

"Av course."

"Come to that place and wait three days. If I do not appear, then you must come to Montreal. You know where to find Despard, our spy. He will direct you where to find me. Now let us get some rest."

They laid down side by side upon the greensward. Their fears had passed away, and they understood that it was the mysterious influence which prompts a man to speak in subdued tones while in the presence of death, which had acted upon them in landing. Long before the morning they were on their feet, and pushed the canoe from the shore, heading it for the western bank. Here Mick landed, and with many farewells to his beloved leader and friend, he went his way, sniffing audibly and cursing the "country." This man, though rough and uncouth, loved his master well. The dangers they had shared together had knit their hearts by a closer tie than master and servant ever can know. As long as Wilton opposed him, Mick would have suffered untold torments rather than go to Schenectady. But, when he no longer opposed him, Mick gave way, though full of wrath at the cause of their separation.

"Ye'll be takin' the canoe up the lake?" said he.

"Of course," replied Wilton. "I have no intention of walking all the way to the French head-quarters, when I can take the river. Once in Canada, I defy any one to say I am not a Frenchman."

"Have ye got the clothes?"

"Yes; they are hidden at the outlet. Never fear for me; I will make as good a voyageur as you ever saw. Once more, good-by, old boy. Take care of yourself."

"I'll do *that*, alanah!" replied Mick. "I'm the b'y to take care av me own scalp, sure. It's you to rin intil danger whin there's not a shaddy av use. Don't I know ye, bad 'cess til ye? Ach, mony's the time I've known ye to do it. But, gud-by til ye. God save ye from harum, an' don't forget Mick O'Toole."

CHAPTER III.

THE RED HERCULES.

THE young man turned the head of the canoe up-stream and set to work. It was not yet daylight, but he knew the bearings of the land so well that he was not likely to make a mistake. An hour passed, and the darkness became more intense, as it often is just before the daylight appears. He rested a moment and waited for the light. As he lay there, idly rocking upon the water, he became conscious that a canoe was passing close at hand. There was no time to get out of the way. The only thing to do was to lie quietly and allow the other to pass. As it did so, he could make out that it was propelled by a single paddle, by the regularity of the stroke. So close did it pass, that he could distinguish the dark outline of a long canoe, and of a tall, dark figure kneeling in the center. Once he lifted his rifle, but Wilton took no pleasure in slaying men except when forced to do it in order to save life, and he laid the rifle down again.

As the other canoe neared the shore, daylight began to appear, and Wilton took up his paddle. A small island lying in his course, he pushed his canoe behind it, and waited to

see who had just passed him. As the morning came more brightly, he saw the object of his search. The canoe had been drawn high up on the beach, and its former occupant was standing on a headland looking across the lake. It was an Indian, of gigantic stature, in the war-dress of a chief. That noble and imposing figure Wilton had once seen, and, once seen, he could never forget it. He remembered, upon one occasion, being in Montreal, of seeing a number of Indians pass through the street, together with some French officers. Among them was this man; and Despard, the spy of the English in Montreal, had told him that this was Wemonna, the "Giant Chief of St. Regis," as he was called.

The men about the camp-fires at night had many stories to tell of this wonderful man, who was, in his way, another Tecumseh. No man knew better how to foster the interests of the Indians—none were braver in battle. Possessing, as he did, a kingly presence, the St. Regis were not slow to acknowledge his power.

"I hope I won't have to meet that fellow," thought the young man, glancing uneasily toward the shore. "He has the cunning of a fox, and would tell an Englishman almost by the scent. I must get out of this."

He had drawn his canoe well up on the bank, as he thought. Turning toward it, to his horror he saw it a hundred feet from the shore, floating down with the current. To cast his rifle on the sod and plunge into the water, was his first thought. To keep below the surface was another. Calculating his distance well, he rose in such a way as to leave the canoe between himself and the shore. A small piece of the rope by which he anchored it was hanging over the bow. He pulled it further down and began to swim, not directly toward the island, but in a sort of ellipse, in the course which would be taken by an eddy. The chief upon the shore was looking carefully at the canoe, which, at that distance, might have been a log as well. He evidently was in doubt. Once he stooped and took up the paddle of his own canoe, but laid it down again, as if thinking that he must be deceived. The floating canoe ere long disappeared behind the little island, and the young man breathed a sigh of intense relief.

Luckily, the trees upon the shore were very high, and

screened him from observation. Pushing out his canoe cautiously, and taking care to keep the island between himself and the headland upon which the chief stood, after first pushing a log about the size of the canoe into the water, he paddled carefully to another island, directly in a line with the one where he had lately stood. As he reached it, he lifted the canoe from the water, carried it across, and launched it on the other side. This done, he came back to take an observation.

He had not been a moment too soon. The head of a canoe was just coming in sight round the point of the other island. It was the Giant Chief, who could not make himself believe that it was *not* a canoe he had seen upon the water. When he saw the log floating away he appeared satisfied, and turning his canoe, disappeared from view.

CHAPTER IV.

SHAKE HANDS ON THAT!

A PERILOUS way lay before the young and adventurous man—a way over which bloody feet had trod, on their return from some dreadful massacre to the almost hopeless captivity of the Canadas. Wilton knew his danger well. The St. Regis and the Huron were in the path, straggling bands from both tribes always were on the trail, ready to strike at the heart of any man who did not bear *Frenchman* in his face.

The marvelous address of the young provincial thus far had kept him almost unknown personally to the French and Indians. While the former regarded him as a dreaded spy the Indians looked upon him with a sort of holy horror, as the possessor of miraculous power. They had seen men drop suddenly when he was near, and no one could tell by what agency he slew his foes. Taught to take their lessons from nature, any thing out of the ordinary course of things was beyond their comprehension. The trees had a language; the

flowers spoke to them; but, such acts as those of Wilton, the Silent Slayer, were prodigies which only supernatural agencies could achieve."

Hence they feared Wilton, and strove by every means in their power to rid the earth of him. Knowing their hatred for him, the man accepted the danger for the end he could attain.

As the light craft sped on, the voyager thought of his absent friend, who had been willing to join him in this perilous enterprise. His bosom warmed toward the faithful man, who had been so ready to work in his service. Lost in a reverie, he was not conscious of his danger until he heard the dip of a paddle near at hand. His first movement was to grasp his rifle, and point it at the head of the new-comer.

"Your pardon, monsieur," said a voice, speaking English with a French accent. "Do me the favor to point your weapon another way."

Wilton looked at the speaker. He sat alone in a bark canoe. It was a man in the uniform of a captain in the French service, a fatigue dress. He showed no arms except the sword at his thigh and pistols in his belt. His face was dark and forbidding, and he had the haughty air of one accustomed to command.

"Who are you?" cried Wilton. "Pass on."

"No haste, my young friend. You have asked my name. You shall have it. I am Captain Mariot Dujardin, of the French service. May I ask your name?"

"Certainly," said Wilton, looking at the dark face of the other more curiously, for in him he recognized the companion of the young Frenchman they had found dead upon the isle. "I am called Egbert Corneille, and my masquerading costume is assumed in order to move at liberty in the English villages. When are we to look for the torrent? We have already seen the clouds."

"Soon enough. It is not the French way to wait on account of difficulties. Pardieu, I am out on the same service as yourself. Always during a truce such men as you and I find their work to do. That is the way we draw first blood. And, by the way, I lost a comrade the other day on an island in the lake."

"Ha!" said Wilton; "and how was that done?"

"You shall know. We had come to the island, and were sitting under a tree, when a shot came--how I do not know, and he dropped dead!"

"You buried him?"

"Yes, as well as I could."

"Liar," muttered Wilton; "you thrust him into a hollow tree, like a dead dog."

"What did you say?" asked the Frenchman.

"Nothing. It is a curious thing, the death of this young man. You did not give me his name."

"Vaudeleur D'Arigny. We were sent out to find, if possible, the intentions of the enemy. Which way are you bound?"

"I am forbidden to tell."

"Where shall I see you again?"

"In Montreal."

"At what time?"

"In about a month. Perhaps we shall meet sooner than that, if you expect to see service."

"I have seen it long ago. You must have heard my name."

"Certainly. Being in the secret service, it has not been my happiness to know you. I should be glad to renew the acquaintance at some future time."

"I am coming to meet a chief at this point. You must have heard of him. He is called Wenona, the Giant Chief of St. Regis."

"I have seen him in Montreal," replied the young man, briefly. "I must now bid you good-day. My business is urgent."

"Why not come ashore and see the chief? Jean Chartier will be there, though I don't like the fellow. He is too kind to our enemies."

"That is bad. They deserve no mercy."

"Certainly not. Perish all who strike against the lilies of France! Jean Chartier will be the essence of politeness to the enemy, even under fire. I have known him to disarm a man, and then give him back the sword to renew the combat."

"What would you have done under the same circumstances?"

"Kill my enemy by any means. Will you come and see the chief?"

"I can not."

"Then I give you good-day. I hope we may meet again soon."

"When we do, you shall be welcome," said Wilton, as the boats separated. "Yes, steel to steel, point to point, hilt to hilt; I believe before God that yonder knave killed his friend. He has it in his face to do a deed as terrible as that. My curse upon his black face, and blacker heart!"

For two days and nights he floated over the silent bosom of the lake. Night was coming on as he neared the shore, near the mouth of the Chambly river. Running his canoe into the mouth of the river, he pushed for the shore. Near the spot where he landed a tree had been uprooted and left a cavity beneath. Into this cavity Wilton plunged, wearing the green uniform of the rangers. He emerged again, another man, clad in the uniform of a French partisan. His step, his air, every thing was changed. You would have said that the man who entered was not the same man who came out."

"*En avant mon enfant!*" said the young man, laughing.
"Vive le Roi!"

He again took to the canoe, and paddled gently onward. He knew that he could not proceed a mile from this point without the greatest danger. The canoe glided through the water almost without a ripple. The keen eyes of the young voyager glanced from side to side, conning every tree and bush from which an arrow might be aimed at his heart. He was not at all surprised when a voice shouted:

"Qui est là?"

"Un ami," replied Wilton, taking great pains with his accent.

"Come on shore and let us see your face," said the voice.
"Too many times men travel under false colors."

Wilton obeyed without a word, and landing, was met by a French partisan, in the gaudy dress affected by these men. A keen-eyed, sharp-visaged man, whom no danger could daunt,

nothing appal, nothing fatigue. About him were grouped a motley band of men, in various rude dresses suited to their forest training. They were twenty or thirty in number—Indians, half-breeds, Frenchmen as savage and unclean as the others, and two or three men in the neat uniform of the French army. All looked at the young man curiously as he came into their midst.

"Now, mes enfants," said the captain, roughly, turning to his men, "you will hear me catechize this lark. If he trips in a single thing, remember your duty. Down he goes; for, by the soul of the great Louis, he shall die. Now, then, who are you?"

"I am called Egbert Corneille."

"Whither are you bound?"

"To Montreal."

"What will you do there?"

"Attend to the business I have in hand."

"What might that business be?"

"It *might* be any thing."

"What *is* it?"

"My own."

"You are sharp; but, at the same time, let me say that you are playing with sharpened steel. I want you to look me in the face and tell me whether your business is civil or military."

"Civil. That is more than I can say of yours. *Peste*, man! who gave you the right to meddle in my business? Remember that French blood is hot. Though I will bear much, I will not bear every thing. My business is such that I can not reveal it to every one. It is a delicate business—an affair of the heart. Ah, mon Dieu, you would not interfere in a thing like that."

"You are a thorough Frenchman, to say the least," said the other, laughing, "and you can read a Frenchman's heart. No, I can not interfere in an affair of that kind, if you will show me a token."

"It is here," said Wilton, drawing the locket from his bosom. "Voici!"

"I see," said the captain. "You shall be at liberty to go. But, as we mean to go to the city in half an hour, perhaps

you would do well to go in our company. It will save you awkward questions in passing the barriers. Whence did you come?"

"From Ticonderoga."

"Ha! did you meet any of our men on the lake?"

"Yes; I saw Captain Mariot Dujardin, and spoke with him."

"Scelerats! I hate him. He is un lâche. Do you understand me?—un lâche! I have sworn some day to make daylight pass through his body. May I die if I do not keep my word; and my name is Lamont—Claude Lamont, of the Forty-third."

"You must do as you please, Monsieur le Capitaine. This man is no friend of mine, and, if I must tell the truth, I did not like his face. Did you know that his companion was dead?"

"Who?" demanded the captain, staring at him. "His comrade? Not D'Arigny?"

"The same."

"Don't say that, monsieur; you will break my heart. And I am a rough fellow, too. I have killed men—always in fair battle, mind you. If there is any dirty work to be done, I always have some one about me who is ready to do it. Don't tell me that the ensign is dead."

"It is too true."

"You shock me. Let me tell you that there was no lad more beloved in the whole army than D'Arigny; not a man among us who would not risk a duel to get his favor. It was not altogether for himself. He has a sister, here in Montreal, who is queen of the city; she has no rival. Every one loves her—every one swears by her. And Vaudeleur is dead! My God, who will tell her?"

"Did she love him very much?"

"Love him! That is a tame word to describe their feeling for one another. They adored each other. Who will dare go to her and say, Your brother is dead? How was it done?"

"He was killed on an island in the lake—so the captain says. He does not pretend to know even from what direction the bullet came. He only knows that it did come, and his comrade was shot dead."

"He was alone with the poor lad?" said the partisan, with a suspicious accent. "You tell me this?"

"He was."

"Alone on an island. Do you know how far the island was from shore?"

"About a mile."

"The ball could not come from the land?"

"Impossible."

"Is there any place on the island where a man could hide?"

"Not one."

"And the captain saw nothing of this murderer, you say?"

"Nothing."

"Strange. There is a mystery here. As I look at your face, I read a dark suspicion there. We think the same. You believe, as I do, that this man murdered his friend. I will find the motive for you. You know nothing of the character of this base man. I do; I have studied him for five years. I know him to be guilty of crimes which would make an Indian shudder. He has made the English more bitterly our enemies by his inhuman cruelties. Woe to the settlement upon which he makes a night attack! There is no hope for them—man, woman, or child! I have seen him, with his own hand, strike down age and infancy. I fought him for it once, and he gave me a thrust through the shoulder in payment for one in the arm. I will never forget him."

"You seem to know him well."

"That is true; I have been with him a long time. This black-hearted dog thinks he loves the sister of D'Arigny. The result—he persecutes her with his attentions. Her brother takes no notice. He has faith that his beautiful sister will never yoke herself with infamy, and he is right; she refused him. Her brother upheld her in it. At the same time they go out on the trail. He never comes back. That is a true picture."

"Then you think—"

"That this *lache* killed his companion and my friend?
Yes!"

"If you find it to be true, what will you do?"

"I will kill him. But, I make no doubt of it. You shall see when he comes back that I will insult him. He will resent the insult. We shall meet. One of us will be killed. If it should be I, promise me one thing."

"What is that?"

"That you will follow out the feud, and, dying, leave the work to some brave man, who in turn shall give it to another, until this beast has been swept from the face of the earth."

"I will, upon one condition."

"And that?"

"That you stand by me in any difficulty I may be in before I leave Montreal."

"It is a bargain! Shake hands upon it! It shall go hard but we will make this odious man avoid the face of the earth. He can not kill us all."

"No. What do you wait for now?"

"For a runner from a party of Indians who went down the lake a few days ago. They expected to capture a fellow who is giving us a world of trouble—a wily man, a credit to his work. Ah, a few such would be the making of the French army."

"What is he called?"

"He is best known by the sobriquet of the Silent Slayer, which the Indians gave him—for what reason I know not. They have a fable that he can shoot a rifle without making any noise. All a mistake, of course."

"Did you ever see him?"

"No, nor any one else. He is invisible; he glides about to places where no Englishman ever comes, and goes back unharmed. They do say that he has been in Montreal for over a week. Such a man needs looking to."

"And you sent a band after him?"

"Yes; Rolling Thunder undertook the business. I never had but one Indian whom I could send on an expedition with any hope of success."

"And that one—"

"Is Wenona. Ha! here comes the runner. Do you hear that call? Receive him, men, and bring him to me here."

CHAPTER V.

THE DOUBLE DUEL.

THE man who entered the camp was dressed in the **garb** of the St. Regis, and evidently had just arrived from a long run. His soiled garments were covered with the dust of the road. He was a warrior of low stature, with a malignant eye, which the young man took care to avoid. He recognized him at once as one of the men who attacked himself and Mick O'Toole in the pass. He could only hope that the fellow would not recognize him in his present disguise.

"Ha, Rainbow," said Captain Lamont, "you are welcome. What news do you bring?"

"Rainbow brings bad news for the ear of his white brother. His heart is very sad."

"Speak out then; let us have the worst of it. Where is Rolling Thunder?"

"Rolling Thunder will never again tread the war-trail," said the runner. "He has gone to the happy hunting-grounds of his people. My heart is sad."

"Dead! How came that about?"

In brief, sententious language, the Indian told the story of the fight in the pass. He dwelt largely upon the extraordinary bravery of the Silent Slayer, whom, to the delight of the young man, he described as a man of giant stature.

"The Giant Chief is mighty," said Rainbow, "and his arms are swift to slay; but, what is he to the Terror of the Woods?"

"Did you see him?"

"I only saw his face, and it was like a flame. Rolling Thunder fell dead before it. When we looked at the chief he was dead. There will be wailing in the lodges of the St. Regis when this is known. Men will bow their heads in grief, and be sad for the great chief who is gone."

"He was a bloody villain, and a fit consort for Captain Dujardin, whom may all things good confound," whispered Lamont to Wilton.

"Why do you use such instruments?"

"Lord bless us, man! We must use any and every instrument within our reach to attain the great end. Englishmen may love their country and flag, but not as a Frenchman loves his. Wherever they see the lilies float aloft, and hear the national music, the heart of the true Frenchman leaps for joy. They glory in their flag. To make it greater, to see it wave over newly-conquered lands, is their mission. A Frenchman dies on the field of battle, or goes to sleep in his blood: what to him is the agony of death or of wounds? All is suffered and sacrificed for the flag."

"Such devotion is noble," said the young man, breathing hard and looking admiringly at the face before him, which, under the inspiration of the moment, became brighter as he talked. "I admire it in any man, much more in you."

"You do not think me capable of this? Believe me, all of us do not fight for pay. I would not draw sword or pistol for money. But, I must soft-soap this Indian a little. He expects it. Listen to me.

"My brother," he said, addressing the Indian, "our hearts are very sad at these words. We feel that a great man has left us, and we are glad to know that he died by no common hand. A great warrior should know how to die nobly. None who have seen Rolling Thunder doubt for a moment that he knew how to die. You have buried him?"

"We have."

"His bones will lie far from the burial-grounds of his fathers," said the partisan, "but his spirit will roam in the happy hunting-grounds, with those who have gone before. Such men can die, but there is an open path before them, in which they can tread who have died nobly. Let my brother's heart be at ease. Rolling Thunder is happy now."

"And shall the man who slew him walk fearlessly forth, and laugh at the St. Regis? He is a devil. Bend-the-Bow is wounded, Sleep-by-Day is wounded; they heard no sound, but the balls pierced them before they could say from whence they came."

"He is indeed a devil," said the Frenchman, gravely. "My brothers must catch him and burn him with fire. Where is Wenona?"

"He is on the trail, and will be in Montreal as soon as you."

"Then we had better be upon the march. Up with you, boys! Shoulder your pieces and away to the city! Meet me at the Fleur de Lis to-morrow at ten, and you shall know what you are to do."

Wilton had kept his face somewhat turned from the eyes of the savage, throughout the interview. He knew the fellow was sharp-sighted, and was not quite certain he did not suspect they had met before. He was going into the very den of the lion. This did not frighten him; he had been there before, and he marched as coolly by the side of his new friend as if he trod on English soil, backed by a regiment of British troops. To be sure, he kept his eyes about him, and watched every movement of his new-found friends, not knowing at what moment they might turn to enemies.

"You have heard of this Silent Slayer, as the savages call him?" asked Lamont, as they walked on together, while the men straggled off at will.

"Yes."

"Have you ever seen him?"

"I have seen a man called by that name," replied Wilton, "and I must say the devil is not so black as he is painted. I saw him several times: in fact, we ate at the same table. It was during a visit I made to Albany, in the time of Baron Dieskau."

"What was he like?"

"The Silent Slayer, or the marquis?"

"The first."

"Can you not take the word of the Rainbow that he is of giant size?"

"An Indian loves to exaggerate," replied the captain. "Let us have your idea of him."

"He is a young fellow, no larger than I. He may be a little taller, but I think not. His hair and eyes are exactly the color of mine. I rather liked the fellow, and he has a cold-blooded way of going among the Canadian cities which rather pleases me."

"So it does me. I like bravery, wherever I find it. We have some men who can appreciate a brave deed. Jean

Chartier and Moran, and—shall I say it?—your humble servant, have friends on the English side. Moran saved the life of Putnam, a noted colonial leader, when he was tied to a stake. *Peste!* Do not let us fight as if our only thought was to exterminate each other! I am a little rough sometimes, but my bark is worse than my bite."

They were marching through an open wood, having left the river, to cross the neck of land between the Chambly and the St. Lawrence, at Montreal. The country was indeed beautiful, the season being that time in the Canadian summer when every thing looks its freshest. The dark foliage of the pine contrasted with the different shades of green on the oak and laurel. Under foot was a leafy carpet, and the knolls were crested with wood flowers of various shapes and hues. Birds flitted in flocks or in pairs through the branches. It seemed impossible that this charming woodland retreat could be desecrated by man's hatred, but it was so. This tender grass had before now upheld the burden of a bleeding man. In such leafy glades, savage ingenuity had tortured its victims. Under the stately trees their groans had ascended, mingled with yells of savage triumph as they danced about the fatal tree.

"I am a little cautious how I traverse the woods alone just now," said Lamont. "A few days ago I had occasion to punish three of my soldiers for some offense, whereupon they deserted. I have since heard that they have sworn to take my life. I believe that they were incited to this conduct by our very good friend Captain Dujardin. I hope I may meet the villains one by one, but they are just the kind of fellows to shoot a man from behind a bush. Curse all cowards!"

"Are they in the woods?"

"Yes. One of my fellows met them on the Chambly yesterday, and it was then they made their threats as to what they would do with me when they had the opportunity. They may get it yet to their sorrow. Yet two of them are excellent soldiers, and the best men with the small-sword I had in my command. One of them really is better than I with the sword. You never saw such a fellow. Look out for him! Nothing is lost in *his* play. A left-handed man, he comes at you with a pliant wrist, position neat, mathematical,

the very impersonation of a devil! You never saw such work. The other rogue is very nearly my match; but I can handle him. The third is a clumsy boor, of whom there is no fear. Do you fence?"

"A little," replied Wilton; "enough to hold my own. I do not care to be tried."

"Do not say that; a little sword-exercise, now and then, enlivens a man. One feels a new creature after something of the kind—at least, I do. Zounds! Hear the steel hiss, look into the eyes of your enemy, read there his determination to conquer, and then set the teeth hard and fight! A strong arm drives a stiff blade home!"

"Skill is better than strength."

"I know it. If you ever cross blades with Seguin, the man I first spoke of, beware of a disengagement he uses. It is simple—the simplest disengagement in the world; but it is done like lightning."

"I do not expect to meet him."

"But you will," said Lamont, suddenly lowering his voice. "I was afraid this would happen. Do not turn your head. They are crouching beside the path about twenty yards to the left. Do not notice them, but when you hear my pistol, draw your sword and attack the man in the slashed jacket."

"What do you mean to do?"

"I mean to shoot the fellow in the first bush. That is the boor. He may as well be out of the way."

"You might miss. Shall I not try a shot at another at the same time?"

"No," replied Lamont, "I want some sword-play, and I will have it. When you hear the pistol, at the man in the slashed jacket."

"Is that the best fencer?"

"No, the other is he. He wears a hunting-shirt. If you look closely you will see him behind yonder blasted pine. I will cure him of tramping the woods to do murder, or die in the attempt. Curse such villains! *En avant!* we shall see what we shall see."

They pressed forward quickly. Wilton longed to take his rifle from his back and try a shot at the fellow behind the tree. He even loosened it for that purpose, and then left it in tha

situation, so that he could throw it off at a moment's warning.

The burly desperado whom Lamont had marked for the pistol-shot was crouching behind a bush, rifle in hand, waiting for the coming of the two men, but it was not intended that he should attack, for his confederates had the greatest confidence in their skill in fencing, and never thought it possible that they could be overcome.

They were now nearly opposite the cover in which the big villain lay. There was a movement of the right hand of Lamont, and the bright barrel of a pistol shone in the sun. The next moment came a sharp report, and the man in ambush threw up his hands, and without a cry dropped on his face behind the bush. At the same moment the others sprung from behind the trees with drawn swords. They were met by men equally determined. The spot where they confronted each other was a little open space in the forest, carpeted by a short green turf. Lamont greeted them with a loud laugh.

"I greet you, *mes enfants*! What do you want? Tojours will not trouble anybody. He has taken a blue-pill. I am afraid he will find it hard to digest."

"You have murdered him," cried the foremost of the two; "and now we will kill you."

"Thanks! you do me too little honor, and my companion none at all. You forget that I am a little used to sword-practice and that my young friend may know a little something of it as well. We shall soon see."

As he spoke, Wilton suddenly sprung at *the man in the hunting-shirt*. He was a tall fellow, with a nose hooked like the bill of a vulture, and a cruel look in his dark eyes.

"He is mine!" cried Lamont.

But, before he could say another word, the man in the slashed jacket, whom he had destined as the opponent of the stranger, made a thrust at him, which he was obliged to parry.

"Carte and counter carte!" he cried, as he returned the thrust of his opponent; "keep the wrist at work like a wind-mill for that fellow; I can attend to this one."

After that the captair had all he could do to keep off the furious attacks of his assailant, who was called Langlier. Lamont wanted to get the job done as soon as possible, being apprehensive that Wilton was no match for his assailant. He began to press his adversary after the first five minutes, forcing him back step by step. The soldier had not the iron endurance which characterized Lamont, whose swift passes amazed and appalled him. Bleeding from a wound in the shoulder and another in the arm, the fellow still struggled feebly to keep his arm up against the captain. At last, an unlucky slip gave Lamont the opportunity he sought. The point of his keen blade slipped under the guard of Langlier, and he began to bear down upon the hilt. In this play the strongest wrist must win the day if neither sword broke. In this case, the strain was too much for the blade of Langlier; it broke close to the hilt, and left him at the officer's mercy. Lamont took advantage of it by knocking the fellow down and binding his hands and feet with his own belts. This done, he turned to the other pair, fully expectlng to find Wilton bleeding from half a dozen wounds.

To his surprise it was all the other way. Wilton was fighting without any appearance of fatigue, though the combat had lasted ten minutes, while Seguin, whose garments were stained with his own blood, was using all his arts to break through the wall of steel which seemed to surround the young man.

"Ah, ha!" cried the captain. "The biter is bit! Go on, my worthy young man. By heaven, I love you from this hour."

The play of Wilton was wonderful. Standing with his left foot advanced, for he was left-handed as well as his enemy, he parried all assaults with the greatest ease, and repaid them by painful wounds. Seguin, panting and excited, when he heard the captain's exclamation, knew that his companion had been overcome, and that he was alone—alone to face two truly terrible foes.

"I won't interfere, as I thought of doing," said Lamont, seating himself on a log. "How do you find him, my dear sir? Does he trouble you much?"

"Not in the least," replied Wilton. "He has allowe?

himself to get out of temper. That is bad. A true swordsman is cool, and he is hot."

"Devil!" hissed Seguin, making a thrust in tierce; "parry that!"

"Certainly," rejoined Wilton, with an aggravating smile.

"And that!"

"Why not?" replied the Silent Slayer, returning the thrust by a deep wound in the shoulder. "Don't you think you had better give it up?"

"Do you think I will yield while Lamont sits grinning there? Never!"

"Then keep your breath; you will need it all."

Up to this time Wilton had not attacked his enemy, simply thrusting when an opening was made, but not forcing the play. The persistency of the fellow vexed him a little, for, though an able swordsman, Seguin was a child in the hands of his adversary, who had few equals in the British army. Indeed, he had made the use of arms a study, and could fight with any weapon. To the use of the sword he was particularly adapted, having long arms, a strong wrist, and the peculiar advantage which a left-handed man always has in a battle of this kind.

"Yield, fool," said Wilton. "I am getting tired of this."

"Are you?" replied the deserter. "I am not; I'll have you yet!"

The eyes of Wilton fairly scintillated at the word, and for the first time he put forth all his power. A wall of fire seemed to flash before the eyes of the Frenchman. Before he fairly understood how it was done, the sword was wrenched from his grasp, and he lay prostrate, with the foot of Wilton on his breast, and his point at his throat.

"Now will you yield, villain?" he cried.

The fellow was silent, too proud to beg for mercy, and rather wishing death by the sword than by the shot of his comrades. But the captain interposed and tied the vanquished man in the same manner as his companion. Lamont blew a shrill whistle, and in a few moments several of his men came back.

"Take charge of these rascals," said the officer, "and

deliver them safely in Montreal. Go to yonder bush, Gautier, and see if the man I shot is alive."

The order was obeyed, and the victim found lying 'n his face, as when he fell. They rolled him over on his back and saw his face frozen into a kind of stony horror, terrible to see. The deadly bullet had struck him in the center of the forehead and passed out at the back of the head.

"Bury him!" said Lamont, briefly. "He deserved his fate, no matter how he got his death. He will never again lurk in a bush, to destroy honorable men. You need not wait, boys. Let Gautier and Indian Tom find a resting-place for this carion. The rest of you take the prisoners to the city. Say to Colonel St. Claire that they attempted to murder me, and only failed because my friend and myself happened to be the better swordsmen. Away with you. Do not let them escape. If you do, your lives shall answer for it."

"We will keep them safe, Monsieur le Capitaine," said one of the men. "*En avant, messieurs!* Forward to your burial. You know the end. 'You deserted,' the commission will say. 'You attacked your superior officer. Guilty! Shot!'"

With this curt summary of the probable course of the affair, the men disappeared, driving their captives before them.

"How far is it to Montreal now?" asked the scout, as they proceeded on their way.

"About five miles; we can walk it in an hour. I wish to be in the city as soon as possible, to see those vagabonds under the sod. There will be a commission to-morrow to try them. I shall be rid of two dangerous enemies, and lose one of the best swordsmen in America. I am sorry for that. Why need a man who carries a good blade be a villain? It is annoying! But, *parbleu!* what a Saladin you are! I give you my honor you would puzzle the best master of fence who ever trod this soil. Will you give me lessons?"

"If I have the time."

"How long will you remain in Montreal?"

"I can not say. When the business I have undertaken is finished, I shall go back to Ticonderoga or Frontenac. I think I shall be away in a week."

"Can you give me an hour each day?"

"Perhaps. I will try."

"Thanks. I want your way of getting over that rascal's disengagement. It did not trouble you in the least, but it bothered me a great deal."

"I will teach you that, gladly. I shall need your help when I get to the city, in finding some persons I must see. You will aid me in this?"

"You have my promise," replied Lamont. "You are my friend from this hour, if you turn out to be Mephistophiles himself."

They were now toiling up the southern slope of a low mountain. The path was difficult, but they clambered on, aiding their ascent by grasping the limbs of the trees and the bodies of the smaller growth. They reached the summit, and Lamont, stretching out his hand, cried, "Montreal!"

CHAPTER VI.

JUST IN TIME.

WILTON cast his eyes upon the scene below. A panoramic view of the city lay before him. Those who have visited the Canadian city know the position of the mountain. It lies to the south of the town, and is a round eminence, giving a commanding view of the surroundings. The two branches of the river which form the island were in plain sight. The young scout had seen Montreal before, but never under circumstances like these. Something seemed to say to him that now he saw the city in which he was to encounter dangers greater than any he had ever known before.

"What are you thinking of, my friend?" asked Lamont, kindly.

"My thoughts are so conflicting that I can hardly tell you," replied the young man. "A thousand things are in my mind, if I could only give them expression. Let us go on."

A quarter of a mile further on, they came to the first barrier. The captain readily passed, and gave his word for Wilton.

"I don't know who the devil you are," he said, "but you wear a good sword, and I will pass you anyhow."

Three barriers were encountered in succession, and they entered Great St. James street. Not far from the spot where the Ottawa House now stands, then flourished an ancient hostelrie known as the "Fleur de Lis." It was a low, rambling, wooden building, and before the door swung a sign which gave passers to understand that for a small consideration Jack Delois stood ready to furnish food and shelter for man and beast. There was something enticing in this quaint old structure, with its wide, hospitable doors. Weary with his long journey, the young man did not need much pressing to turn aside into the room where the guests were served with drink, for the purpose of cracking a bottle of wine with Lamont. Several tables were set at various points around the room, and the two took one near the window, whence they could look out into the street. A man in a white apron, portly and rubicund, the very beau ideal of a host, came bustling up.

"A bottle of your best wine, Jacques. You know my brand. Bring me any thing else, and your life shall pay the forfeit."

"It shall be as Monsieur le Capitaine desires," said mine host, hurrying away. He was back in a moment, bearing glasses and a high-necked bottle, which had only seen the light in thirty years, while being conveyed across the Atlantic.

"A corkscrew, Jacques," said the captain.

Jacques produced the needed article, and the captain drew the cork, at the same time descanting loudly on the merits of the wine.

"Bottled in the Golden Age, I give you my word, Monsieur Egbert. Ah, see it sparkle! Taste that, and tell me if you ever drained a choicer cup. Let me give you a toast: To the ladies of France. For, before king and country, they have our worship."

They drank the toast laughingly, and somehow forgot the king and country when the next glass came, for Wilton broke into sudden laudations of the wine, which was really of an excellent quality. The generous fluid cheered him after his

long march, and his cheeks took a glow like that they had shown when fighting with Seguin in the woods.

Several persons, passing the window, looked curiously at the new-comer, drinking with Captain Lamont; for, as in all places, a stranger is an object of curiosity to everybody. Two or three young officers strolled in and joined them at the table, receiving an introduction to Wilton under his assumed name.

"A young man I found in the woods," cried Lamont, warmed by the wine, "who can take a small-sword and beat you all together."

"Captain!" said Wilton, in a deprecating manner.

"It's true, gentlemen! You all know that villain Seguin. You know, too, that we thought him the best swordsman in Canada. Very well: Seguin is a child in the hands of this gentleman."

The young men looked surprised.

"Don't quarrel with him, I warn you. If you do, be it on your own heads. He is not quarrelsome."

At this moment a man of middle stature entered the room and seated himself at a table not far away, ordering a bottle of "vin ordinaire." No one in the room could have said that this man looked at anybody except the landlord, and yet he knew every individual present. He had a peculiar way of looking at a person without lifting his head, which some men acquire. He knew that Wilton was at the table, and he also knew who he was; for this was Despard, the English agent in Montreal, a man who had for ten years or more furnished them with information of the plans of the French.

It was at his house Wilton always stopped, whatever his disguise.

The keen-eyed spy, who had seen him in many disguises, could not be deceived when Wilton made no attempt at concealment further than wearing a French dress.

Notwithstanding the fact that each recognized the other, neither spoke. Despard drank his wine in silence, paid his bill, and rose to depart. At the same moment Wilton rose for something which lay upon a table near the door. As Despard was passing out, the young man tripped upon his sword, and caught hold of his hand to save himself from a fall. No

one in the room saw any thing more than an unlucky stumble, yet in that moment Wilton had contrived to slip a note into the hand of Despard, which he had prepared some days before.

"Come back," cried the young officers. "Pardieu, you must not drink this wine like water. I have only taken four glasses, and behold, I fly—I am a bird."

"I must leave you," said Wilton. "You must excuse me."

"But we shall see you again?"

"Without doubt."

Bidding them good-evening, he left the room. It was now dark; but few people were in the street.

At the corner of the next block, a man came out and met him. It was Despard. A few low words passed, and then the two started down the street together, in the direction of the cathedral. They had not gone a hundred yards when the sudden clash of arms startled the echoes of the narrow street. Darting forward on the instant with drawn sword, Wilton found himself detained by Despard.

"What would you do?"

"It is a fight! Don't you hear the swords?"

"Let them brawl," said Despard, coolly.

But, the sound of a woman's voice was heard in the din. Wilton broke away from the detaining grasp, and seeing that he could not restrain the ardent young man, Despard grasped his own weapon and followed. The moon was now shining brightly, and they saw a sight which might have warmed the coolest blood. An Indian of giant stature stood in the middle of the street, in a noble and commanding attitude. Wilton knew him. It was Wenona, the Giant Chief. He had thrown off his blanket, and appeared clad in a sort of robe of wolf-skin, with fringed leggins and moccasins. His breast and arms were bared, and the great ridges of his powerful muscles rose, fold upon fold, denoting his wonderful strength. In his right hand he grasped a tomahawk of great size, such as few could wield in one hand, but which seemed but a feather in his grasp.

His head was crowned by the eagle-plumes of a chief, and his fierce eye was fixed upon four men who were in a group

before him. Behind him, and apparently protected by him, crouched a woman, who had uttered the cries which brought Wilton to her aid.

"Stand back there!" cried the chief in excellent French.
"What do you want?"

The men were half-drunk Canadians, of mixed blood, and they snarled at the speaker like tigers.

"We want the girl," replied one. "What business have you to interfere, Wenona?"

The chief answered by a gesture of contempt, and motioned the speaker away.

"Down with him!"

They sprung at the Indian together. In a moment the headmost assailant fell, stricken down by the flat of the hatchet. To the surprise of Wilton, the giant seized the prostrate man by the shoulders and swung him over his head, striking down the next comer. Against this novel weapon the remaining men dared not strike. They drew back in confusion, but at the same time three more came out of a side-street and rushed to their comrades' aid. The eyes of Wenona flashed fire, and dashing down the senseless man he held, he darted at the others, and, seizing one of them, whirled him shrieking over his head, then dashed him to the pavement completely stunned. As he did this, all the others rushed at the chief, sword in hand. Wilton darted in, and took off the attention of two of the assailants, until Despard, more wary, relieved him of one. The clash of steel by this time roused the guard and they were heard coming up the street on the double-quick. The assaulting party gave it up, and disappeared down a dark alley, just as the guard appeared on the scene. The Giant Chief had seized upon the man who attacked him last, and putting him under his arm, was squeezing his throat at intervals, making his screams for mercy come in short and fitful notes. The lady now came forward and the captain of the guard hurried up. It was Lamont.

"By my faith, chief, you have been making a noble slaughter here. What is the matter? Sacre! if there is not my gallant swordsman again. What; have you had another bout, then?"

"Not much, captain. The rascal ran, after a pass or two."

"I warrant you. What is the matter here?"

"The chief can tell you. I know nothing of it myself," replied Wilton.

"Speak, Wenona," said Lamont.

"The white girl was passing," replied the chief. "Four men tried to take her away. The St. Regis respect women. Wenona would not suffer so great a wrong, so he saved her from them. Then came others and fought me. But, the young white warrior with the long knife came, and they ran away when they heard you coming. It is well."

"And who is the lady?" said Lamont, advancing nearer, and looking at her closely.

"It is I, Captain Lamont," replied a silvery voice.

"Marie D'Arigny!" cried the captain. "What an outrage! Do you know who the ruffians were?"

"You may find that easily," replied the young lady. "These are my first assailants at your feet."

Under the application of bayonet-points the stupefied men came to their senses and were assisted to rise. Looking at them closely, Lamont recognized them as privates in Captain Dujardin's company. They were sent away under guard. Wilton was looking earnestly at Mademoiselle D'Arigny. As nearly as he could tell in that uncertain light, she was the original of the picture he had taken from the dead body on the island. As he stood gazing at her, he was aroused from his reverie by the voice of Captain Lamont.

"Monsieur Egbert Corneille," said he, "let me present you to the favorable notice of Mademoiselle D'Arigny. Mademoiselle, I make you acquainted with a swordsman second to none whom I know in America."

"I can well believe it," replied the young lady, giving him her hand cordially in the frank way which Frenchwoman have, "since I have seen something of his prowess. I must thank him for myself."

"No thanks, mademoiselle. The pleasure of doing you a service amply repays any little danger connected with it."

"You are pleased to be complimentary," said the young lady. "I would thank the chief, but he allows no thanks. What a Hercules he is. Those villains were straws in his hands!"

"He is the strongest man in Canada," said Lamont.

"I have a wish to prefer. My brother is not at home, but the house is in my hands to entertain his friends. Let me beg that you, Monsieur Corneille, and your friend, will meet Captain Lamont at dinner to-morrow, at my house."

"For myself," said Wilton, "I shall be only too happy. As for my friend, Monsieur Despard, it is for himself to say."

"I never go out to dine," said Despard, gruffly.

"I should be glad of your company, sir," said the young lady, hospitably.

"You must excuse me, mademoiselle. My habits are those of forty years, and I can not break them now. You do me too much honor."

"But Monsieur Egbert does not know the way to your house," said Lamont.

"Monsieur will escort me home, if he chooses, in company with Monsieur Despard, and then he can not miss the way—that is, if he lodges with Monsieur Despard. He goes my way, at least."

"Have it your own way," said Lamont. "You dine at five, I suppose."

"Promptly. See that you are in time, Monsieur le Capitaine."

"Good meat never gets cold by my delay," laughingly responded Lamont. "I give you good-evening. Now chief, if you will go with me I am at your service. I stop at the Fleur de Lis. You must find me out to-morrow, Monsieur Egbert."

"I will, if possible. Give you good-night, captain."

Mademoiselle D'Arigny took his arm, and they walked slowly away. Despard endured this for a moment, and then, telling the young man that he would find him at his house, stepped swiftly along. The mind of Wilton was in a tumult. He was in agony for the light-hearted girl whose little hand was clinging to his arm, and whose happiness he must crush by telling of her brother's death. She prattled on as only a Frenchwoman can, and he became intoxicated by her grace of language. They stopped at length before a large stone house, with beautiful grounds around it, not many blocks from the site of the cathedral. They stood at the gate a long time

talking of various things, until Wilton started, and looked at his watch.

"It is late?" she said, inquiringly.

"After twelve. You have yourself to blame. You have been too entertaining, mademoiselle. I have something to tell you, but I will not tell you now. Or stay. When does Captain Dujardin come home?"

"He is here to-night; he came with the chief. I believe he meant to call to-night. I must bid you good-evening. Do not forget the hour we have for dinner. I wish you would tell me your secret now. I do not like to wait. *Bon soir.*"

CHAPTER VII.

LIAR!

WILTON found Despard chafing at his long delay. The man was a monomaniac in his hatred of the French, by whom he had been brought up, although he was in reality an Englishman.

"You are wasting precious time in idle dalliance, monsieur," said he. "I do not like it."

"It shall not last long, Monsieur Despard," said Wilton. "I have reasons for wishing to know this young lady. When I explain the matter to you I am sure you will not blame me."

"It does not matter; I do not wish to wait for explanations of any kind, as long as you do not allow it to interfere in business. But I do not like to have a woman in my affairs. There is work to do this night."

"What work?"

"There is to be a council at the castle. I learned it through a disaffected man I met. If we could get the papers of that meeting we need do no more. All the leading men of the colony are here, and whatever they agree on, that will be the plan of the campaign."

"Undoubtedly. But how are we to obtain access to the castle?"

"Leave that to me. I know the ways of that building as well as any man in the city. To-morrow night is the time."

"It is a precious opportunity, which we must embrace," said the young man, solemnly. "It will be at the peril of your life and mine, but if we succeed, who can calculate the advantage to the colonies!"

"I take the risk," said Despard, coolly. "I have entered upon this work with open eyes. If I die to-morrow it will be with the glorious thought that I have done some harm to France. I hate their country; I hate their laws."

"Why do you hate them?"

"I cannot tell you now. It is enough that I will do any deed, risk any death, to injure the nation. Enough of this; go you to rest. To-morrow, mix as much as you choose with these people. But beware of the Giant Chief and of Dujardin."

"Why of Dujardin?"

"Because he will hate you like death when he finds you favored by Mademoiselle D'Arigny, as you will be. You have appeared to her, on your first meeting, in the attitude of a hero. First impressions are strongest. You will always be a hero in her eyes."

Wilton flushed and looked down. They retired at once.

Early next day the young man walked down to the Fleur de Lis. As he passed the house of Mademoiselle D'Arigny, he saw her at the window, and then he knew how beautiful she was. He had seen her the night before under the uncertain light of the moon. Now, in the brightness of the morning, her clear face set in a little mullioned window as in a frame, she looked down at him. Her dark hair floated in heavy, disheveled curls about her face. Her profile was pure and clear as a cameo, her lips just parted. He removed his hat and made a polite obeisance.

"Good-morning," she said. "Do not forget to come to-day, and come early. I am dying for your secret."

He again felt a pang, as he thought that he must throw a cloud over her young life, unless Dujardin spoke before him.

as he might do. He wished that he might, for then the first bitterness would be passed.

At the Fleur de Lis he found Lamont, who was eager for a bout with the foils. Nothing else would suit him, and the tables were set back, gloves, masks, and foils produced, and the two had a set-to with the buttons on. In the course of the struggle, the young men he had met the night before came in, and with them Wenona.

Wilton fenced with several of the officers, showing wonderful skill with his weapon. In short, not one of them escaped a palpable hit.

"I told you so," said Lamont. "He is a devil of a fellow with the small-sword. I wish we had a few like him. What do you think of his play, chief?"

"Good," said Wenona. "Where he learn?"

The abrupt question nearly startled Wilton out of his assumed character. But, having great command over his features, he managed to escape showing any feeling. Wenona said nothing more, but sat with folded arms, watching a bout between Lamont and another officer.

Wilton was ill at ease. He did not know that the chief had ever seen his face. To solve his doubts, he went and sat down at the table near him, and watched the fencing.

"Where you learn, eh?" repeated Wenona. "Lamont don't know."

"In France—at Calais."

"France very large, eh?" demanded the chief.

"Very," said Wilton.

"Learn to fight there good," said the chief. "Wish my warriors fight with long knife. Get good many warriors killed with long knife."

"Why do you not use the sword in fighting?"

"Too late. Used to tomahawk. Not so good as long knife, but Wenona is very strong. Long arms."

The bout was now finished, and the two men and the lookers-on came to the tables and began to pound lustily for Jacques. That worthy came.

"Some of *my* wine," said Lamont. "D'Arcy pays for it. I took his foil out of his hand."

The wine was brought, and they filled. After the young

man next the chief had filled his glass, he pushed the bottle over to Wenona, not knowing his character. The chief started up, with a countenance inflamed by rage, and for a moment looked as if he meant to take vengeance on the young man who had offered him wine. His tomahawk was in his hand, and he dashed the bottle into fragments at a single blow.

"Fire-water!" he shouted. "Kill Indian. Hugh!"

After this act he turned on his heel and stalked away. The officers looked at the ruins of the bottle for a moment in some dismay, until Lamont set a good example by bursting into a roar of laughter.

"Ha! ha! Orlando," said he; "the chief looked as if he would like to split your head. It will teach you a lesson. Never offer *him* a bottle. If you were to do it a second time he would not spare you."

"I did not know that the big, overgrown thief didn't like wine," said Orlando, considerably crestfallen.

"Of course you did not, or you would not have offered it. But, as the wine is gone, I see no course but for you to order another bottle, since it was through your fault that D'Arcy's treat was lost. We got one glass out of it. Silence all. I propose the health of our brave guest and prince of swordsmen, Monsieur Egbert Corneille. To the bottom."

They drank the toast with cheers, and Orlando ordered another bottle.

"Why does the chief hate the sight of drink?"

"Because he had a brother, a man nearly as large as himself, who got into a habit of drinking. In less than two years from the time he began to drink, he was in his grave. A bottle was hardly ever out of his hand. He seemed fascinated by the desire to drink. Ever since that time the offer of wine will throw Wenona into a fury. He is a noble fellow."

"He is indeed," added Wilton, heartily.

"He is a remarkable man in all respects," said Lamont; "a man of undaunted courage, of a keen sense of honor, and full of chivalrous feelings, which would do honor to any man of any race."

Wilton took lunch with the captain. After dinner, they were seated in the tap-room, playing a game of chess, when

several men entered the room, with a prisoner. Wilton, engaged in the study of an intricate move, did not look up, until he heard a familiar voice say :

"Arrah, ye devil. Kape the baggonet out av me back, will ye now?"

He looked up suddenly. There, sitting between two men, with his hands bound, he saw Mick O'Toole! Their eyes met, and the wooden stare with which Wilton regarded the prisoner, convinced Mick that, whatever Wilton's intentions were he did not wish to be recognized. Mick scratched his rough head in perplexity, half amused, half in anger.

"Who have you there, boys?" asked Lamont, stopping, with his hand hovering over a piece he designed to move.

"A person we caught this side of the Chambly, Monsieur le Capitaine," replied one of the men, saluting. "He is no doubt an English spy."

"Spy, my dear sir? What did he have to spy down there? However, you did right in taking him. He might do us a mischief."

"Arrah, me honey," said Mick, "spake English, can't ye? Phat the devil d'ye want wid me, at all? Sure, d'ye think ivery man's yer inemy because he don't spake the dirthy language av ye?"

"Quite right, my man," rejoined Lamont, laughing. "Then I am to understand you consider yourself a friend to France. Of course you have no objection to fighting her battles. A man like you must make a good soldier."

Mick again scratched his flaming head. He had no desire to enlist in the French army, but he objected strongly to a prison, with the chance of being shot as a spy. He knew also that the truce between the French and English was hollow, and was being broken every day on both sides, and very slight reasons would induce them to hang a man found skulking about in their country.

"Sure an' I niver turned me mind to sogerin'," said he. "Does ivery man have to be in the army that lives here?"

"Most of us," said Lamont, "and especially those who come here under suspicious circumstances. We know nothing of you, and you have your choice, either of going to

prison with a strong chance of hanging as a spy, or joining my company."

"W'u'd ye let me think about it?"

"Certainly. You can think about it—in your prison."

"Must I go there, yer 'an'r?"

"Unless you make up your mind to join me."

"I think there is no choice in the matter. It is far better to be a soldier than to lie in prison where nobody can aid you," said Wilton, speaking for the first time.

"Does yer 'an'r really think so?" said Mick, with a queer look. "Then bedad I'll be a Frinch sojer from this hour. Arrah, bad luck til it, phat the devil w'u'd I be nixt? Phare will I go, yer 'an'r?"

"Take him to Lieutenant Courcy," said Lamont. "Have his name entered. Give him arms and teach him his duty. But, I know this of Irishmen, they are devils to fight. I want no better soldiers."

Mick was led away by his captors, who jabbered to him in French, and gesticulated wildly, in the vain hope of making him understand something. He only glared at them in speechless wonder, and promising in his heart to make the lives of his comrades such a burden to them that they would be glad to get rid of him at any price.

The sudden appearance of Mick complicated matters somewhat, and set Wilton to thinking. The blundering, good-natured fellow had found a man going to Schenectady ; so he sent the dispatches by him, and turned back on the trail of his master. He knew the road well, for they had traversed it together. He had reached the banks of the Chambly in safety, when he fell in with a party of Frenchmen and was taken prisoner. It was done by surprise, or more than one of them would have been laid on the sod.

Wilton had hoped that the faithful fellow would keep away from Montreal. But here he was, and he must be taken care of. Wilton saw at once that in prison their chances of aiding him would be small indeed ; hence his advice for his servant to join Lamont's company.

About four o'clock they went up to the D'Arigny mansion. Marie received them, and as they entered the long *salon* Wilton saw that she was not alone. Captain Dujardin had evidently

entered at that moment, for he had not yet relinquished his hat. He rose at their entrance and was introduced to Wilton.

"It seems we have met before," said Dujardin.

"Yes," replied Wilton. "Have you enjoyed good health since that time?"

"The best. I have but just come in myself. I thought I understood you to say you were not going to Montreal for some time."

"Did I say so? I have changed my mind, as you see."

He had vacated a portion of the long sofa, on which he sat, for Marie. She pretended not to see it, and took a seat near Wilton.

"I have not told you that Monsieur Egbert aided in saving me from great danger last night. He blushes, but he shall not escape. You shall tell the story, Captain Lamont," said Marie.

Lamont, nothing loth, rehearsed the adventure, in spite of the protestations of Wilton that it amounted to nothing. Captain Dujardin did not take the interest in the recital that might have been expected. His eyes showed anger. Lamont was watching every movement of his face.

"By the way, captain," he said, "the men who did this outrage belonged to your company."

"To mine?"

"Every man. I am going to lash them until they give their motive for the act. They deserve it. Who could have set them on?"

"They will be very likely to tell the truth under such circumstances," sneered the other.

"Always, when the whipper has an inkling of the truth, and can tell when they stray too broadly. At any rate, the experiment shall be tried."

"I can not afford to lose any of my men. Do not carry your experiments too far."

"You forget the cause."

"Hang them or shoot them. Don't torture them."

The eyes of Lamont began to gleam. He recognized the hand of Dujardin in the attack on Marie. But, he said no more, and when dinner was on the table managed to get

between Dujardin and Marie in such a way that Wilton led her to dinner, and took the post of honor on her right hand; while he took the left. Dujardin, crowded to the foot of the table, ground his teeth in a rage.

"My brother will soon be here, gentlemen," said the hostess, cheerfully. "Since he has not come with Captain Dujardin, he must have some business at head-quarters. That can not detain him long."

Wilton turned pale. The awful moment had arrived at last. Her innocent face was turned toward Captain Dujardin. His face was a study. Captain Lamont never removed his eyes from it. Every changing passion, love, hate, fear, showed themselves in his eyes.

"Your brother," said Dujardin, stammering; "I have not told you of him. Must I tell you now, before these friends?"

"Stop," said she, in a hard, strained voice. "Give me a moment in which to draw my breath. You commence in an ominous manner, and I fear you. My brother—you know how I love him. Then tell me where he is."

Dujardin gasped for breath.

"Tell her," he said, hoarsely. "I dare not."

He rose and rushed from the room. Lamont followed his example. Wilton was left alone with the beautiful girl. He had risen, and stood grasping the back of a chair for support.

"You have something to tell me?" she gasped. "Do not keep me in suspense."

"I have something to tell you," replied Wilton. "I would sooner cut off my right hand than have it to repeat. Your brother—"

* Is dead!" she cried, in a voice of agony.

He bowed his head. She gave a little gasp and sunk down. He caught her as she fell and lifted her to a sofa. Her hands were cold. The news had been terrible, almost too much for nature to bear.

He was chafing her hands, and endeavoring to bring her back to life, when the others reentered. Dujardin uttered a cry, and ran to take her into his own care, but Wilton laid his hand upon his breast.

"Back, sir! Would you touch her now? Would you dare?"

"I love her," cried Dujardin, looking at him with fiery eyes. "Do not stand in my way."

"If you come nearer, your life be on your own head. Keep him away, Lamont, or I will not be answerable for his safety."

Lamont seized him by the shoulder and pulled him back, and Wilton bathed her face with water, until he saw some signs of returning animation. At last she rose to a sitting posture.

"Tell me about it," she said, faintly. "I can bear it now."

"Captain Dujardin must tell you. He knows more about it than I do: at least, he ought."

"Tell me, Mariot," she said.

He faltered out his account of the death of her brother. Lamont watched him, and saw that he never lifted his eyes from the floor during the recital.

"And you left his dear body there? Why did you not bring it home?"

"My cousin, how was that possible? I was alone."

He lied. He knew that it was easy for him to get the assistance of a score of Indians of the band of Wenona. He was going on with his tale in the same tone, and again asserted that he was alone, when a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder. He looked up. The Giant Chief stood beside him. He had entered by the open door without ceremony, and had heard the concluding words of the story.

"Let my brother talk with a straight tongue. I was afraid you would not tell the white girl the story, and I came to you. You must remember that Wenona said, 'Take as many of my young men as you wish, and carry the body to Montreal. His sister's heart will be sad, but not sore, if she knows that he sleeps in the grave of his fathers.'"

"Liar!" shouted the infuriated man, "you said nothing of the kind."

Wenona made a single step, and seizing the fellow by the shoulder, lifted him from his chair, shaking him as a terrier shakes a rat. Then for the first time the man knew the

wonderful power in those long arms. He shrieked for help, and the chief dropped him with a gesture of proud scorn. He was on his feet in a moment, with a knife in his hand. Lamont and Wilton seized and disarmed him.

"Let us nail the lies of this man where he stands," said Wilton. "He has told you that the young man was shot. I tell you that he is a liar, black from the pit."

"Let me get at him," hissed the villain, struggling.

"Go on," said Lamont.

"In coming down the lake, I landed on the island of which he speaks. He has told you that he buried the body. Again he lies. He did no such thing. I found it thrust into a hollow tree. I took it out and buried it on the beach. It is a beautiful place, mademoiselle. I did not know your brother, but I say to you in honesty that I was as sad in laying him down to rest as if I buried there one of my best and dearest."

"Do you tell me that Mariot Dujardin left my brother in that way?" said the girl, a sort of horror in her tone.

"I will swear it, if necessary. Another lie I note here. He told you that your brother was shot. He was not. He was stabbed to the heart by a narrow, double-edged knife."

"He lies! he lies!" cried Dujardin. "He was shot. I tell you he was shot."

"You have said enough, sir. You left him there as he fell. I do not accuse you, but I fear you know more of his death than you tell. To prove that I saw the body myself, here I bring you the relics which I found on him. This ring I took from his finger, which shows that he was not killed for money. His purse was in his pocket. There it is. His sword I buried with him. And from his neck I took this miniature, which is that of his sister."

She took them eagerly, kissing them again and again. There was a spot of blood upon the purse. She left it there, and approached Dujardin with flaming eyes. Every one was appalled by the expression of that young face. A sort of fierce light had come into it, and then a strange glory over it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CASTLE GUARD.

"MARIOT DUJARDIN," she said, in a hollow voice, "you have come to me with falsehoods in your mouth, from the dead body of my brother. Either you are a coward or a villain. I know you are not a coward, to fly and leave him to his fate because you feared to share it. You must be a villain. Tell me, and at once, who shed this costly blood?"

He was tongue-tied. The expression of her face terrified him.

"Speak!" said Wenona, in a voice of thunder. "Why do you not answer the words of my daughter?"

"How can I tell," said Dujardin, sullenly. "Beware what you do, Marie D'Arigny. Do not humble me before those who hate me."

"Do not threaten," said Wenona, taking his hatchet from his belt, "or I will kill you."

"No bloodshed, chief," said Lamont. "You must promise me that."

"Let him speak, then. Why does he keep his tongue between his teeth? Wenona does not say his words twice."

"Answer, if you have any answer to make," said Lamont. "The chief will be as good as his word."

"He can not frighten me," replied Dujardin. "But I have given my answer. I do not know how he died. I only know that he fell dead at my side, killed by a rifle-ball."

"You persist in that statement?"

"Yes."

"Against the word of my young friend?"

"Your young friend lies!"

Wilton made a movement toward him, but the girl laid a hand upon his arm.

"Do not resent his insults now, monsieur. I have but glanced at this book which is my dear brother's diary, and

here I find the clue to this deed. *You* killed my brother, Mariot Dujardin."

"I?"

"You. Who else could have done it? There was no one near. You say yourself that when he fell you ran around the island and searched for the murderer. And you did this for the love of me, because he opposed you. Villain! did you think the way to my love was through my brother's blood?"

He was silent now. Wenona stepped forward.

"My daughter has a head fit to make her the wife of a war-chief," he said. "She has said the right thing. If this man had not something to conceal, he would have brought the body home. He is a liar; he killed the young war-chief whom I loved. And now Wenona will kill him."

Again he lifted the tomahawk, and again the others stopped him.

"No, no, Wenona; you must not take the law into your own hands in that way. The head men of the city shall decide. We have no proof unless we get the body, I am afraid."

"Release me!" said Dujardin, angrily. "Why do you hold me? By heaven, every man of you shall rue this day."

"He must not be allowed to escape," said Marie. "I demand justice for my murdered brother. That justice I will have, if I go to the foot of the throne to find it."

"You think to frighten me by your absurd accusations," said the man, angrily. "You shall not do it. If I love you, Marie D'Arigny, it is not my fault. Blame, rather, your beauty."

"Flattery at such an hour as this, Mariot Dujardin? Beware lest I take the law into my own hands and kill you. I am only a weak woman, but for all that I loved my brother well."

"I loved him too."

"You hated him, because he would not use his influence to make you his brother-in-law. You quarreled with him before you went; you quarreled after it."

"I did not."

"A voice from the grave accuses you. Here are the words, in the dear hand which lies under the sod now. Before you speak again, think that you are giving death the lie."

"We might have had some words. Release me. I demand it as my right. If you have any charge to bring against me, let me hear it, or bring the charges before the justice."

With these words he suddenly wrenched himself out of the grasp of Lamont and ran out of the room, and Lamont stopped the pursuit.

"No, chief; no, Egbert; it is useless. What we do must be done according to law."

The moment the villain was gone, Marie drooped again. An unnatural strength had supported her up to this. She wept for her brother, calling him by every tender word of endearment her lips had known from childhood to this hour.

The men bent over her.

"Ay, let him go," said the young American. "But, when we meet again, he shall be called to a strict account."

The chief clenched his tomahawk hard.

"The men of St. Regis hate a snake in the grass. The double-tongue is one. He has come to Wenona with smooth words, when his heart is full of bitterness. Wenona will take his scalp!"

"What shall our plan be?" asked Lamont. "I have an invitation here to a party at the castle for you and myself. He will be there. Shall we go and denounce him?"

"I have no heart for gayety, said Wilton. "But I will go."

"I will go too," said the girl, rousing herself. "I give myself no rest until this villain has received the reward which is justly due to treachery. But, how can I join in the gayety with a breaking heart?"

"You need not," said Wilton, eagerly. "Excuse yourself from dancing. I will not be long before we shall expose him."

"I must be there. Leave me alone for a few hours. It is a sad ending to a day which I thought would be very happy."

The three went out together. Wilton excused himself at the door, promising to meet them in an hour at the Fleur de Lis. He hurried up to the house of Despard, and told him briefly what had happened, and that an entrance to the house, for him at least, was secured. Despard showed little sympathy for the unfortunate young Frenchman, but hailed the chance of getting into the castle.

"All you have to do, when the festivity is at its hight, is to come to the south door of the castle and see that it is open. Leave the rest to me. I know that the Governor and leading men have made this party simply as a cover to their meeting, which will take place while waiting for the other guests to arrive. Go early and get the door open. There shall be guests at the feast they do not expect."

Wilton left him, and hurried down the street. It was now dark, and a dangerous part of the town. The young man hurried on, forgetting this, until several figures darted upon him from various points. They had come from a house near at hand, and a broad gleam of light, streaming from the door, fell upon their faces. The foremost was Dujardin, the rest his creatures.

"Now, dog that you are, hissed Dujardin, "you at least shall never live to tell your tale again. Down with the black villain, boys."

They came at him, sword in hand, and, before he had time to think, he was engaged in the third desperate struggle since he left the banks of Champlain. Leaping back, he got the wall of a house in his rear, and faced them boldly. Yet, for a moment, even his bold heart sunk, for what could he do against so many, and all of them men who lived by the sword? The feeling only lasted a moment, and then—

"Courage!" he muttered. "Trust in God and your good sword."

For three minutes nothing was heard but the rattle of steel, as three of them attacked him at once. But, such was his wonderful address with his weapon that he managed to wound one of his foes severely, while at the same time he kept his own person secure. The wounded man drew off and left the next man to take his place. Carte and counter-carte, was the motto. The wrist of the undaunted young man worked with

the regularity of a machine. Another of the assailants was wounded in the sword-arm, and was of little use. As he fell back, he gave a shrill whistle, and the young hero saw two more men emerge from the open door. As he despairingly made up his mind to die fighting, there came a sudden rush, and a huge form burst through the line of his assailants and stood by his side. It was the Giant Chief. In one hand he held a long knife, already reddened by the blood of one of the ruffians, and in the other a tomahawk.

"Too many on one!" he shouted. "Ah, ha! St. Regis!"

As he shouted this battle-cry, he thrust his knife through the shoulder of one of the assailants, and cut down another with his tomahawk. The fearful left hand was also doing good work. The villains, tired of fair fight first, now ran, leaving Dujardin alone. He saw this, and freeing his blade from that of Wilton by a sudden jerk, he ran into the house, closing and locking the door behind him.

"Hurt?" asked the chief, thrusting his bloody weapons into his belt as he spoke.

"Not at all," replied Wilton. "A little tired. I had too many at me at once."

"Cowards!" said Wenona. "No braves come so many at one man. Bad heart; bad man."

Wilton could not help contrasting this untutored savage, with his noble figure and heart, with the wily and dangerous man who had just fled, and thinking how much the man of civilization and refinement suffered by the comparison. There was no time to waste, however, for the captain might persuade his men to return. So they walked swiftly away together.

"How did you happen to come to my aid?" said Wilton.
"You were just in time."

"Wenona does not like to stay in the big wigwam. The free air of night is better for him. As he walked the path he heard the sound of the long-knives. Wenona loves the sound of the battle. He is very glad to aid his young brother, who came to his help one time. We are now even."

"Thank you, at any rate. My danger was greater than yours, for I think you would have whipped your party alone.

I can not take a man in hand and whip the ground with him as you can."

"Wenona is very strong," replied the savage, with pardonable pride. "Here is the big wigwam where they drink fire-water. Wenona hates it. He does not love men who give it away for wampum. Wenona had a brother once, who was strong as a buffalo; he tasted the fire-water; his heart was no longer brave. But Wenona loved him, and tried to bring him back to his people. His heart was turned to water. He was always in Montreal, drink, drink, drink, till he drown his life. Does my young brother wonder that the chief hates the accursed stuff? One by one his people are passing away. We were many, we were strong, but a stronger than we has been at work, and lo, we are undone!"

"Will you not go in?" asked Wilton, kindly, laying his hand upon the arm of the chief.

"No," replied Wenona. "It is not just that I should go too much to a place where fire-water killed my brother."

With these words he drew his blanket about him proudly and strode away. Lamont, hearing their voices, came out of the tavern, and the two started for the castle. They were welcomed by the Governor's nephew, whom Wilton had already met at the tavern, and shown to a room where they removed their hats and cloaks. When this was done, the nephew apologized to Wilton for leaving him alone, as the officers were having some official business to attend to, which would be over in an hour. He took him into the picture-gallery, ordered in some wine and fruit, and left him to his own devices. This was what the young man most desired, and he took advantage of it. The moment their steps ceased to sound in the halls he slipped out, and hurried down the passage to the south door, which he was told by Despard was seldom used. He found the key in the lock, and turning it, found himself in the garden.

A sentry was pacing up and down not far from the door. He was about to close the door and return, when something in the manner of the sentry attracted his attention. He looked at him more closely, and, as he did so, the face was suddenly turned toward him in the moonlight, and he saw the comical phiz and flaming hair of Mick O'Toole! The man evidently

was but little pleased with his present situation. A glance at his misanthropic visage was enough to show that, and Wilton uttered a low laugh. Mick rushed at him in anger, but an expression of intense joy came into his face when he saw who it was.

"Is it you, Masther Wilton?" he said. "Ah, the devil fly away wid everybody thin, now I've seen yer dear face wanst more. Arrah, whillaboo! murther, but phat w'u'd a poor boy do whin he can niver see the face av the masther he loves."

"Hush, Mick," whispered Wilton. "There is danger in every breeze."

"I'm dumb as a drum widout a sheepskin," said Mick. "Come closer."

Wilton did so, and Mick gave his hand a squeeze which brought tears to his eyes, which were not altogether tears of feeling.

"There, that will do. How long do you stand guard here?"

"All night."

"Good. You know Despard?"

"I ought."

"He will be here before long."

"All right."

"You are to let him in."

"Til the door?"

"Of course. I shall be there."

"It takes you to pull the wool over the eyes av the bla' guards," said Mick. "How ye do it, blame me if I know. D' they think ye a Frenchman?"

"I'm as good a Frenchman as the best, or I should not be in the Governor's house to-night. You know my French is the genuine article. But, I must not be seen talking with you. Good-night."

"When will I see ye ag'in, Masther Wilton?"

"I can not say. I am good friends with your captain, and he will take me where I can see you when I wish. How do you get on with your comrades?"

"Musha, it's little I have to say til them beyant givin' them a tap an' the he'd, now an' thin, to t'ach them to be

civil. I b'ated wan big chap no longer ago than yesterday, d'ye mind?"

" You must not quarrel."

" D'ye call that quarrelin'? Sure, whin I quarrel it manes something. Whin I quarrel, I quarrel to kill."

At this moment a man crept cautiously up to within a few feet of them, and laid down behind a bush.

" Then good-night once more. I shall not forget your faithful conduct in following me here, and when I go, I shall find means to take you with me."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MISSING PLAN.

WILTON reentered the house and closed the door, taking away the key, fearing that some one might lock it. He had hardly done so, when the person who lay in the shadow of the bush crept cautiously away, and leaped the fence in front of Mick, paying no attention to his challenge. That worthy, thinking if he were ungentlemanly enough to refuse to answer, he would not be the man to run after him, betook himself to his beat again, muttering invectives on the heads of all "Frinchmen," and blessings on his "young masther," whom he loved with blind idolatry.

" W'u'd any one believe that Mick O'Toole w'u'd wear the clo'es of a 'Frinch' sojer, an' let himself down to the company av a lot av dirthy, frog'-atin' bla'guards? Not a bit. Sowl av me body! but it's me ould mither w'u'd cry the eyes out av her to hear it."

As he paced his beat, Despard crossed the fence and walked toward him. His orders were to challenge everybody, and he lowered his bayonet and brought his friend to a halt.

" Is that you, Mick?"

" Sure, it is. And this is Monseer Despard? Go ahid. Niver mind the word."

" You may as well give it to me," said Despard. " I might want to use it."

Mick gave him the word, which was " vigilance," and Despard passed on. He found the halls clear, and leaving the main hall, he ascended a side stairs toward the upper part of the house. A servant-maid, dressed in the style peculiar to French girls, met him on the stairs. She started, and nearly dropped the candle.

" Despard ! What are you doing here ?"

" Never mind, Jeannette. Go on about your business, and see that you do not blab of my presence in the servants' hall. If you do, woe be unto you."

" I am not afraid of you," said the girl, contemptuously.
" I will go to my master."

" No, you will not, *ma petite*."

" And why not ?" she asked, in the same tone.

" Because—" He stooped and whispered the rest of the sentence in her ear.

Despard was, in his way, a wonderful man. Had he lived in our day, he would have made a first-class detective. His very instincts and inclinations ran that way. He made it a point to know all the peccadilloes of the servants of families from whom he would be likely to get information. Whatever the social crime of which mademoiselle had been guilty, it touched her, though what it was is immaterial to us. It is enough that she was appalled, and dropped the candle in earnest. But Despard caught it.

" How now ? Do you think you have any thing to say to your master ?"

" No, no, monsieur."

" If so, go and tell it."

" I was joking, Monsieur Despard. Can you not take a joke ?" she replied.

" Yes," he said, grimly—" or make one. Are there any servants near the study of the Governor ?"

" No, monsieur."

" Very good. Am I in danger of falling in with any one in entering the small room next to it ?"

" No, monsieur, unless Jules is there."

" What does that room contain ?"

"Rubbish of all kinds, monsieur, and old wine-bottles."

"I see you are not deceiving me. Now go; and if I hear any thing of this—remember!"

There was some covert threat in this which cowed the girl, for she descended the stairway with drooping head, holding by the balustrade with an unsteady hand. Despard looked after her gravely, and taking off his boots, he put on a pair of list slippers before going any further. As he did so, a man came up the servants' stairs. It was the Governor's valet. He saw Despard, and came forward. Evidently he knew the man, for he called him by name.

"You intrude here then, monsieur? You must go back," said the servant.

"Ah?"

"Or I shall call my master."

"Don't do it, Jules."

"I shall, and immediately."

"Can I not prevail upon you to change your mind? Let me whisper."

He did so, and the countenance of Monsieur Jules turned purple with fear and rage.

"Do not speak of it. How came you to know that?"

"I know many other things connected with your personal history. Par example—"

He whispered again. Jules sprung from the floor as if seared by a hot iron.

"You will say nothing more to me, but go down-stairs, and do not come up again unless your master calls."

The man obeyed without a word of demur.

"Umph!" muttered Despard. "He won't trouble me. What a thing it is to hold a few secrets of this kind! It saves a world of bother."

Walking carefully down the hall, he opened a door leading into a small room. The key was in the lock. He removed it from the out to the inside, and locked the door. He could now hear the hum of voices in the next room, and moved with great care. The room had been used as a butler's pantry, and there was a small sliding door, or rather loop-hole, in the partition leading into the next room. The servants—accidentally of course—had left this slightly ajar. Despar

seated himself on an old table which stood in the room, and peeped through the crack. He had a good view of the room. Half a dozen French officers, of various degrees of rank, were seated about a table, within reach of the opening. The Governor was nearest the window, and as Despard looked in, was talking in a low but eager tone.

"Yes, my friends, the glory of France must not be dimmed. There is not one among us who has not that glory at heart. We are all praying for the time to come when the lilies shall bloom above the thistle and shamrock. In this country, we must be true to our flag as we were when we dwelt in La Belle France."

"We must indeed," said Lamont. "It is in our power to do more. This great land has in itself the germ of a nation greater than France, for from it we can erase the fallacies which injure France to-day."

"It is true, mon ami," said the Governor. "I have had dreams of such a land. We shall not live to see it, but our children's children may. A country which shall have no bounds but the two oceans on the east and west, the arctic regions, and the Gulf on the south. Vive L'America! But, to our plan. If we make France great in this quarter of the globe, we must first dispossess the English. This is no ordinary task. We must not undervalue the tremendous resources of England. Nothing but these and the provincials have saved them from utter annihilation."

"It is the provincials who have done the most," said Lamont. "But for the provincial colonel they call Washington, the men of Braddock would have been entirely cut off. Such men as Putnam, Warner, Seely, and a host of others I might name, do us more real harm than the English regulars, although the latter will not admit it."

"What is your opinion, chief?" asked the Governor, turning to Wenona, who sat a little apart. "Which are the best fighters—the red or the green-coats?"

"Green-coats best to fight in the woods," said Wenona. "Know how better."

"The chief ought to know," said Lamont. "He has fought them often enough. For that matter, so have I. By the way, where is Dujardin?"

"He was invited here. I am surprised that he has not arrived."

"No good man," said Wenona. "Double tongue."

"The chief has no liking for Dujardin, it is plain to be seen," said the Governor. "Let it pass. I shall reprimand him severely for not appearing at the council. Attention; I have drawn up on this paper a plan of our proposed work this season. Here are Oswego, William Henry and Edward. All these places must fall."

They bent over the paper, and the Governor gave a succinct résumé of the proposed work. The officers hazarded opinions as points arose where they could offer them. Little did they dream that the keen ears of Despard drank in every word they said, and was treasuring them up to their hurt.

It was an opportunity he had long thirsted for.

"Any thing to injure France."

This was his motto, and he carried it out through life. To hide and seek, to get information by any and every means, and convey it to the English, was the object of his life. Fortune favored him in a way he had not dreamed of.

The Governor, stretching out his hand to get something on the other side of the table, upset the lamp. In a moment the room was dark. Confusion followed, and after some delay the lamp was relighted.

"Now—" the Governor began. Then he paused and looked from face to face. "Which of you has done this? *The plan!*"

All looked at the table with a blank stare of confusion. The plan, on which the campaign depended, was gone!

The Governor looked sternly from one to another. He evidently suspected a trick.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen, but is this a time to jest and dally? The one who has removed the plan will please return it without delay."

Every one indignantly disclaimed having touched it.

"Gentlemen, if it is your desire to put me in a rage, you will succeed admirably in a moment. I can not endure this trifling. Where is the plan?"

"I know nothing about it," said Lamont. "It lay there when the lamp went out."

"I felt a hand pass near me as I stooped for the lamp. It is impossible, as you all know, for the paper to walk out through a locked door and solid walls. If it were not for this I should not think one of my officers capable of such a trick. I can hardly believe it now. But a man can not doubt the evidence of his senses. Where is the plan?"

"It must be on the floor."

Every one began to hunt for the paper in desperate haste. It is needless to state that nobody found it.

"It touches me to the heart to say it," said the Governor "but every one must be searched."

"Will you not take our word of honor, Governor?" said Lamont.

"What can I think, Lamont? You see the position in which I am placed. If that paper gets to the English all our plans must be entirely changed—you can see that. You can also see that the paper can not have gone out of the room. Good heavens! What a situation for a man of honor! There is no man among you that I have the least reason to suspect of being any thing but a true man, and yet, what can I say?"

"Search me first," said Lamont.

But, before the Governor had extended a hand, all eyes were directed to the chief. He had risen suddenly, and, crossing the room to the place where the Governor sat, he caught up the light and began to examine the wall. His quick eye soon detected the sliding door.

"There!" he said. It was open.

The Governor understood his signal, and suddenly seizing his sword, darted to the door and unlocked it. Two or three of the officers followed him. On opening the door, they saw that he was making for the next room. The door was locked. He opened it by a tremendous kick and rushed in. Lamont followed with the lamp.

The room was empty.

"You were wrong, chief," said the Governor, sadly.

"Not wrong; right," said Wenona. "See this."

He pointed to the dust upon the table. There plainly imprinted, they saw the outline of a man's hand.

"This may be an old mark," said the Governor.

"Not old; *new*," said Wenona.

"Trust the chief in this, your excellency," said Lamont. "Even I am good enough at reading signs to know that this mark was recently made. There has been a man here within the hour. Who it was is a matter of doubt; which way he went, we can not determine. Certain it is, he is gone, and with him the plan."

The Governor made a movement to rush frantically after him. But Lamont held him.

"It is useless, your excellency. Whoever it is, he has had plenty of time to elude us while you were accusing your own officers of the crime. I do not blame you. It looked mysterious at first sight. I should have done as you did myself."

"The plan is gone," gasped the Governor. "What shall we do?"

"Change the plan. That is the only way. Let us go down. The guests are arriving and expect you. And I have left a friend alone all this time. Remember, gentlemen, not a word of this."

"You hear," said the Governor. "Keep it secret. Not a guest must know how we have been duped. Ah, if I had that man, how pleasant it would be to take him out and hang him to-morrow."

"You may yet have the opportunity," said Lamont.

"May the time come soon. How quickly the rascal took advantage of the light going out!"

"He was indeed prompt. Shall we go down?"

"Yes; and remember, let no man know by our faces that we have been fooled."

CHAPTER X.

THE NETTED LION.

THE gentlemen entered the salon in good time. Quite a party of civilians had gathered, and were grouped about the room at various points, conversing. Two young officers had cornered Wilton and were afflicting him with an account of their personal conquests. The ladies had not yet come down from the dressing-rooms. A chattering like a bevy of magpies on the stairs, however, announced that they were on the wing, and directly they began to drop into the salon in couples, dressed in the bewitching way which only a Frenchwoman can know. Frenchwomen have the reputation, among many, of being, as a race, more beautiful than the English and American ladies. They are far from that, but they know how to set off their beauties to the best advantage.

Marie came down alone, and seated herself apart. Wilton shook off the human burrs who clung to him, and went to her where she sat.

"Your sorrow is great," he said; "but you must not allow it to prey upon you too deeply."

"My sorrow could not be greater," she said. "Have I not lost all who love me?"

"You have many friends."

"What is their tame love to that I have lost?" she cried. "He was happier with me than with any other woman, though I was his sister. Love! Do I value the fluttering of insects like these? They can not even bring a blush to my cheek. But, Vandeleur, my darling brother, I shall never see him more."

"I do not ask you to forget what he has been to you, and what he has done for you," said Wilton. "You could not do that. But the day will come when you will think of him as a memory of your youth—one of the sweetest and dearest."

At this moment Lamont came up

"I am come by the Governor's request, to present you to him," he said. "Courage, Marie. The villain shall get his due."

"Thanks, captain, for myself and my dear brother," she said. "Come back to me, Monsieur Egbert; you will serve to keep this host of May flies at bay. I can not endure them to-night."

Wilton felt a thrill as she thus singled him out from among those she had known for years. He was conscious that this beautiful girl already had an influence over him which he could not understand. He would know better what it was before many days.

The Governor received him kindly. As he extended his hand a harsh voice cried :

"Hold, monsieur! Touch not the hand of a spy and traitor!"

All turned in the direction of the sound. There in the doorway stood Captain Dujardin, fully armed, his face wearing an expression of triumphant malice, glaring at Wilton.

"Monsieur le Capitaine," said the Governor, astonished, "I do not understand you."

"He is a spy," repeated Dujardin. "He is here, with a confederate, to ruin the cause of France."

"Monsieur," said the Governor, "you hear the accusation of Captain Dujardin. Clear yourself if you can."

Wilton had drawn his sword, and stood looking Dujardin in the face. He saw that, by some means unknown to him, the villain knew his errand.

"Defend yourself, Egbert," said Lamont. "For heaven's sake, let me hear you speak. It can not be true that you are a spy."

"Let him deny it if he can," said Dujardin, insolently "I overheard him this night talking to an accomplice of his guilt—the Irishman who is a member of Captain Lamont's company, and who is now on guard."

"Deny it, Egbert," said Lamont. "Give him the lie in his teeth."

"That I am an Englishman," said Wilton, "I will not deny. That I came at this time solely to gain information is false. I came on an errand of mercy and justice. I came

to unmask one of the foulest villains who ever cursed the earth."

The Frenchman laughed scornfully; he had his victim in the toils.

"Seize him!" cried the Governor.

They rushed at him together. The ladies screamed as Wilton threw himself back to the wall, and for a moment foiled the united attack of his enemies. Lamont stood with folded arms, his countenance expressing more sorrow than anger at the discovery.

"A heaven-born swordsman," he muttered. "What a pity!"

Some of the assailants got within his blade, and wrenched it from his hand. With two men holding each arm, and two pushing behind, he was dragged to the middle of the room.

"Search him!" said the Governor.

They searched, and found nothing on him suspicious except a strangely-shaped instrument, in three pieces, which was in the pocket of his coat. The Governor looked at it curiously, and finding a thread on the pieces, he screwed them together carelessly.

"Take care," said Wilton, "it is loaded. You may get hurt."

"Loaded!" cried a chorus of voices. "It is nothing but a walking-stick."

"It is a gun," said Wilton.

"A gun!"

"Certainly. Since you have it, let me explain its use. At thirty yards it is very effective."

"You will make no attempt to escape?"

"I give you my honor," he replied.

"Release him," said the Governor.

The men obeyed. Wilton took the pieces and fitted them rightly. This done, he stepped to the open window, and planted five or six balls within an inch of each other in the trunk of a tree which stood about twenty yards away. The ladies stopped their ears, expecting a report. None came, and they thought the gun had missed fire. As all were looking in amazement at the strange instrument, Wilton felt a

hand laid upon his shoulder. He turned ; it was the chief. A strange light showed itself in his eyes.

"Silent Slayer ?" he said, in an inquiring tone.

The young man drew himself up proudly, and answered, "Yes!"

A perfect yell of surprise and delight broke from the Frenchmen. The ladies crowded nearer to see him. Stared at like some wild beast, he folded his arms and looked sternly in their faces.

They had caught him at last, the man who had given them so much trouble ! He had put himself in their hands at a time when they could take his life with a pretext of law.

"Ay, stare at me, ye minions of France," he cried. "You have taken me by fraud—by the treachery of that man. Ay, gaze at me ; I have seen a better show of faces in my time. I have this to be proud of : it was through no sharpness of your own you caught me, but through the hate of yonder crawling snake, who has good cause to hate me, murderer that he is."

"Murderer!"

"Yes. I will denounce him. Yonder stands the murderer of his friend, Ensign D'Arigny."

"And I stand here to say that he speaks truth," said Lamont.

"And so do I," said Marie, rising suddenly. "Murderer of your friend, does not the knowledge of your guilt weigh down your guilty soul ? In the sorrowful night, have you never seen his sad, accusing face ?"

"Let me speak," said the Governor. "Do you tell me that D'Arigny is dead ?"

"I do ; and Dujardin assassinated him," said Lamont.

"Liar !" shouted Dujardin, lifting his hand to strike. But, before he could do it, the hand of Lamont struck him down. The presence of the Governor, of the ladies, was nothing to them then. Dujardin rose, foaming, and dashed a card at the feet of Lamont, who picked it up with a smile of derision.

"Gentlemen, remember that you stand in the presence of ladies."

"I remember, monsieur. I have done for the present."

"I at least have the right to speak," said Dujardin. "Let me tell my story. I was sitting near D'Arigny, on the island where he was killed, when he suddenly fell, struck to the heart by a ball. When I stooped to look at him he was dead. I buried him there."

"It is false," said Wilton. "You thrust him into a hollow tree. I buried him myself."

"I am coming to that," said the other, viciously. "I said that he fell, struck by a ball. No report followed it. I take it for granted he was killed by yonder Englishman, with the devilish instrument he holds in his hand."

Wilton could not help it, but he felt the blood rush to his cheeks at this accusation.

"See the guilty blood come into his cheeks, and receding, leave them pale," said Dujardin. "I have other proof. He had in his possession the ring, chain, watch and purse of my unfortunate friend. Who else should have them but the man who killed him?"

"Listen to me, Dujardin," said the young man, dropping his voice almost to a whisper. "Let me tell you this: if I ever escape from this, I will kill you for that lie."

"You will never escape," said the other, with a laugh full of savage glee. "I will see to that."

"You are a fiend," said Marie. "Bear in mind that I hate you more than any earthly thing."

"Remove the prisoner," said the Governor. "Captain, is the Irishman secured?"

"He is, your excellency."

"See them put in a strong place. The commission to determine on their fate shall meet to-morrow."

The captain called in his guard and marched the young man away. Marie seemed to have forgotten her brother in her stranger friend's danger. Did the knowledge that he was an enemy give her a pang? Not that, but that he must be punished. She sprung into the hall and caught his hand.

"Then *you* do not believe this calumny?" he said.

"Would you have come to me, if you had murdered my brother? No, the tale is as false as the heart of Dujardin."

"Let the prisoner alone," said Dujardin, hoarsely. "Guards, attend to him. If he escapes, your lives shall answer it."

They dragg'd him away, and she knew enough of the stern laws of war to be sure he was doomed. And he had come all that weary way to bring her the souvenirs of her dead brother. And she, to him, a stranger!

She could not know all he had felt while gazing on her picture taken from the body of the young lieutenant. She confessed that she was wonderfully drawn by his handsome, open face and expressive eyes. She saw him, then, led like a lamb to the slaughter, and dropped almost fainting in the hall. Lamont was going out to her, when the Governor stopped him.

"A word with you, monsieur. How is it that you know so much of th's dangerous man?"

"I know nothing of him, your excellency."

"Then how came he in your company?"

"In faith, I found him on the Chambly. His French was perfect, and his story well connected, so what could I say?"

"It must have been he who stole the plan."

"I think not, your excellency. He had not left the house, and no such paper was found upon him. Besides, it seems to me that the person must have known the house very well. I gave this young man no hint by which he could know where the council was to be held."

"I do not hold you blameless in the matter, captain."

At these words the captain drew off his sword and held out the hilt to his commanding officer. The Governor looked at him in surprise.

CHAPTER XI.

A NIGHT OF NIGHTS.

"WHAT do you mean?" he said.

"The surrender of my sword," said Lamont. "Since I am accused, I do not wear my blade in the service of France while the odium hangs over me. Those who fight under the lilies on the white flag must be free from stain."

"I meant not that," said the Governor. "But you have

been to blame. It was your confidence in him which misled us all. Because he happens to be a good swordsman, you must take every thing he says for granted."

"Your excellency, it seems to me a pity to hang a man who handles his sword like that."

"Nonsense. I am glad we have caught him. To be sure, we dare not hang him openly, but out of that prison he never comes alive. You were going with Mademoiselle D'Arigny. What think you of the murder of her brother?"

"If he was murdered, Dujardin was the man who did the deed!"

"I can not believe it. His story is plausible enough. And this murder, more than any thing else, will induce me to hang the Englishman. Good-night."

Lamont found Marie waiting for him.

"Come," she said, eagerly, "let us go to my house. I wish to talk with you."

It was nearly morning before the light disappeared from the windows of the D'Arigny mansion. Soon after, Lamont appeared, walking slowly and thoughtfully down the street toward the Fleur de Lis.

The prison in which the young man was immured, was a large stone building near the river, nearly opposite St. Helen's. The dungeon in which he was placed was almost on a level with the water. In this dark, noisome place he was to wait his fate, whatever that might be. Left to himself, and staring death in the face, a man will look over the record of his life in a moment. Wilton reviewed his, and found, that although wrong sometimes, as what man is not, he had not been guilty of any unpardonable sin. He thought he must die. At his age, the life just opening before him was very sweet, and he had taken his first sip at the cup called love since he had seen Marie. Would she think of him again? Or, if she did, would she not some time believe that he had killed her brother?

The thought was maddening. He rose to his feet and paced restlessly back and forth, over the earthen floor. He thought how that face, pictured in the locket, had sent a thrill through him as he said to himself that, under God, hers was the "one face for him!"

The rattle of a key in the lock roused him. He looked up. The rays of the morning sun were pouring through the grated window, overlocking the river. The door swung on its hinges and a woman, muffled in a cloak, entered.

"A lady to see you," said the jailer. "Excuse me, mademoiselle, but, I must lock you in."

She bowed slightly. The door closed and the lock grated. She dropped the cloak from her shoulders and revealed Marie! Her face was very pale and her lips trembled. He looked at her quickly, and for a moment could not speak. At last he ejaculated :

"You, mademoiselle?"

"I have come to visit you in your trouble," she said. "I could not rest until I had done it. I am sorry to see you here for a good deed. You came here to tell me of my brother's death."

"Mademoiselle, I speak as a man who is near death has a right to speak, and as I should not dare to speak unless death were very near at hand. I pitied your brother and you. But it was only until I saw your face that I determined to come to Montreal. Come and sit by me on this bench ; it is all I can offer you ; you must excuse it."

She took a seat beside him, and he gained possession of both her hands.

"Events are often advanced by circumstances," he said. "If this had not happened, it might have been months or years before I would have said to you what I say now. I love you—I never thought to find the woman I could love as I love you. I love you dearly. There is nothing in the power of man to do, which I would not attempt for your sake."

"Monsieur?" she said.

"Do not interrupt me now by exclamations, my darling. They will neither deceive me nor yourself. I have read faces too much not to know my ground. I repeat, I love you dearly. I can never love another woman. I think you care for me more than any man you ever met. Is it not so? I should not ask you such questions unless I were near death. You can afford to be frank with one who lies in an open grave. Answer me."

She gave a sort of gasp.

"I can not tell you. My heart has been at work since you came here. I have thought of you night and day. It was noble, it was grand of you to come here, to aid me in my affliction. You can not tell how such deeds work on a woman's heart. Yes, I am sure of it now; I love you!"

"My beautiful one," said Wilton, holding her close to his beating heart. "If you knew the life I have led. A wanderer in the wilderness. All my family at one stroke of savage vengeance were swept from the face of the earth, and I was left alone. You can imagine my desolation. No one who knew how I had suffered but my faithful friend, who is in prison for my sake. That untutored Irishman has a noble heart. He followed for my love, as I came here for yours."

"I am glad you have spoken. I know my own heart now better than I ever did. You shall not die, however. I will save you."

"What can you do, poor girl?"

"You shall see. A woman's heart is strong in the cause she loves. She can work miracles. You shall see!"

She ran her eye hastily about the room, noting its strong and weak points with a woman's quickness. The window was a low one. She examined the bars, and found that one of them was nearly eaten through by rust on the side next the river. For this reason it had not been seen by those overlooking the prison.

"I shall leave you now," she said. "Be on the watch tonight. You have better friends in Montreal than you dream of."

He caught her in his arms and kissed her lips again and again. She had come to him like the angel of hope, and he could hardly let her go.

"There, there, encroaching man, release me immediately. My time is nearly up."

She had just released herself, and put up her lips for a decorous parting kiss, when the door swung open, and Major Dujardin, black with rage, appeared upon the threshold.

"*Canaille!*" he screamed. "Lâche! How dare you?"

A glance of fury came into the eyes of Wilton. He looked

about him for a weapon. Nothing appeared but the large stone jug which held the drink allowed him. Grasping this by the handle, he hurled it, with the utmost precision, at the head of the intruder, who had dared to call him coward. The fellow tried to dodge the missile, but, as generally happens, managed to get directly in the way of it. It struck him on the head, and but for the high cocked hat he wore would have cracked his skull. He fell to the floor, deluged by the "vin ordinaire" contained in the jug. He rose, boiling with rage, and, like a coward, as he was, drew his sword upon the prisoner. At that sight, Marie threw herself between them, and confronted him with gleaming eyes.

"Who is a lâche, now, Captain Dujardin? Do the men who are brave draw the sword upon an unarmed man?"

"He has insulted me," he panted.

"You insulted him first," she retorted.

"What right had he to salute you?" he demanded.

"What right? Ah, monsieur, you question his right. I can set you at ease on *that* point. I allowed him to salute me, because he is my *fiancé*. Does that satisfy you? I might ask Captain Dujardin how he dares intrude upon the private affairs of others? Be so good as to leave us."

"I beg your pardon. This prison is under my charge."

"Is your authority higher than the pass of the Governor?" she said, producing it.

"It is not. Let me look at it, however."

She handed him the pass. He read it and called the jailer.

"How long has mademoiselle been here?"

"Just an hour," said the official, briskly.

"Then your time is up, mademoiselle. Jailer, secure the door. Marie, come with me."

She gave her lover her hand and left him, but not to walk by the side of her enemy.

"I have a weapon here," she said, showing the handle of a poniard; "and I will use it without scruple if you come near me. The jailer will show me the way out."

"You are determined to hate me, then?" he said.

"Certainly; and I have the best reasons in the world for

the step. Be so good as to keep a little further off, monsieur. You approach too near."

Dujardin ground his teeth savagely. He had hated her brother because he opposed his marriage with his sister, and that brother lay dead on the island in Champlain. Now the sister, for whose love he had done the deed, hated him too.

"Accursed fate!" he muttered, as the girl stepped out into the street. "How every thing conspires to baffle me."

The night came, and such a night as men love who do deeds which they would have hid from the light—a night without a star. The clouds hung low, and muttered. At midnight a storm of great violence came, and lasted for an hour. After that, it was darker than ever. At this hour a boat pushed out from the shore, a mile above the prison where Wilton was confined, containing five persons: four men, and a small person muffled in a cloak. The men pulled cautiously down-stream toward the prison, an isolated building, standing gloomy and vast not far from the bank of the stream.

These are the men whom the love of Marie has brought to the rescue of her lover. There is Lamont, cool and collected, determined to save so scientific a fencer from death by the cord; Despard, dark, stern and resolute; Wenona, apparently as impassive as marble, but really enthusiastic in the cause of the young man whom, by right, he ought to have considered an enemy; Mick O'Toole, eager and impulsive, and ready for any danger in the cause of his master. The Irishman, by dint of hard swearing, and his incomprehensible oddity, had satisfied his captors that he knew nothing about the Silent Slayer, and after a severe inquisition, had been set at liberty. Lastly, in the stern of the boat, hid in the long cloak, was Marie, whom nothing could dissuade from going with the expedition.

The party landed opposite the prison, and stole silently toward it. Wilton was lying there, wondering whether that weak girl could do any thing for him, but in his heart thanking God that, whether he lived or died, she knew that he loved her. While the storm raged he had worked in silence with a small knife which his captors had overlooked, picking out the pieces of rusty iron upon the bar which must be broken if he passed out to freedom. The hours dragged by.

Once or twice he tried his strength upon the bar, but as often as he did so, though it bent it would not break.

Midnight came, and the terrible storm was at its hight. When it lulled, he began to be anxious. His window was not far from the ground. If he could only break the bar! He had seized it again, and was about to throw out all his strength, when he saw the face of an Indian peering through the bars, so close that he felt the breath upon his cheek.

His heart sunk within him. An Indian must of course be his enemy, and the hopes he had nursed of escaping left him when he saw him. They rose again as a deep whisper came through the bars.

"Silent Slayer! Hist!"

Wilton's heart gave a great bound. It was the chief, Wenona.

"Come to break iron, get you out," said Wenona. "Which bar?"

Wilton pointed out the weakened iron. Wenona laid one hand upon the wall, and the other on the bar, and by a single exertion of his powerful muscles, snapped the iron and bent it out of the way. Through the opening thus made, by the exercise of all his address and strength, aided by Wenona, the young man managed to escape.

He stood free on the outside.

"I can't go without the Irishman," said he. "Where is he confined?"

"Redhead here," said Wenona. "All friend here; come and see."

A few rods away stood the party, waiting for them. He pressed the hand of Lamont hurriedly, and gave the other to Mick, who nearly sniveled over it. Despard nodded to him.

"And who is this?" asked Wilton, turning to the cloaked figure.

In reply, a soft little hand stole out to meet his, and he was answered.

"Oh, come quickly," she whispered; "you are not yet safe."

CHAPTER XII.

"THEY ARE GONE, ALL GONE!"

THEY stood together in the silent street, beneath the walls of the somber prison. Wilton looked at it with a feeling akin to awe. In that prison he had spent some hours which he could not fail to remember, to his dying hour. He looked about on the sturdy band who had risked so much for his safety and called them by name. But, Lamont raised his hand impressively and commanded silence.

"It will not do, Egbert—for so I must call you. Remember that this is the only act of my life which will not redound to the honor and glory of France, the nation I love so well. But when you stood by me in that fray in coming up from the Chambly, I promised to stand by you, and, by St. Denis, I mean to do it. But you are not called upon to know me."

"You set me right, monsieur," said the young man. "I should have kept silent. I beg your pardon."

"It is unnecessary," replied Lamont. "I do not know any one here. I may have my suspicions, but that amounts to nothing."

Here he gave an indescribable shrug and glance at Marie, who pouted and laughingly struck him with her hand. As she did so they became conscious that some one was watching them. The chief communicated the fact to Despard in a low voice, and significantly touched the handle of his hatchet.

"No, no," replied Despard, in a low voice. "It needs not that. Wait a moment."

The chief drew back, and Despard, without appearing to do so, looked keenly at the man who was lying in wait for them. He was peeping round the corner of the prison in a sly manner, drawing back his head like Punch in the pantomime, whenever he thought any one looked his way. Despard smiled and made a silent gesture to the chief to come nearer. Half a dozen words passed between them, and Wenona drew

back into the shadow. The next moment, when Wilton looked for him, he was nowhere to be seen.

"Keep silent all," whispered Despard. "We must not move for the present."

A stillness, like that of the death-chamber, fell upon all the party. Though they did not understand what it was which the chief had disappeared to accomplish, they had sufficient faith in his ability to do the deed to leave it entirely to him. Despard, after the chief left them, drew back into the shadow and muffled his face in his cloak. Wilton possessed himself of Marie and threw an arm around her, for protection, of course. At least, so he said, and if he did not know, who should?

The watcher appeared to be in doubt whether to advance or retreat. At times he drew his body entirely behind the wall and was hidden for some moments, and then appeared again, peeping at the party.

"Masther Wilton," said Mick.

"Well, Mick."

"Would it be wrong aff I was to go and punch that snake on the head?"

"Decidedly wrong, Mick. You would probably make noise enough to rouse the guard. Keep silent."

Mick, bemoaning in his inmost soul the fate which robbed him of the right to punch the head of the peeping man, was constrained to keep silent by this order. But, from time to time, he indulged in certain dumb show, expressive of a desire to perform the pleasing duty. A row is dear to an Irishman's heart.

"Masther," he said, after a while, feeling it to be impossible to keep silent any longer.

"I told you to be silent."

"I know it. But look at the baste. Ivery time his head pops out I does be wishin' I was there to give him a butt unther the ear. Ain't nobody to punch him?"

"Somebody will get punched in a moment if they are not careful," said Wilton, "and it is my opinion it will be Mick O'Toole."

"Arrah, masther dear! An' sure ye can't blame a b'y ef he don't like to see a bla'guard av a fellow poppin' out his

head from behind a wall like a coward, as he is. Arrah, bad cess to ye, an' the likes av ye! I wisht I had ye on the shure av Champlain, wouldn't I tie a kettle til yer tail, ye dirthy dog! Arrah, whillalo, murther, an' isn't it enough to make the did rise out av their graves to see him? Whisht! Get back, ye baste."

Of course the Irishman was too good a scout to suffer his voice to rise above a whisper all this time. He knew that they were in deadly peril, and restrained himself, though the desire to punch the head of the offender rose higher every moment. The watcher did not change his tactics in the least, though Despard began to cast anxious glances in his direction. Lamont began to be uneasy.

"Let's get out of this."

"Impossible," said Despard, "while that man is watching."

"Then I shall probably be the occasion of a muster of troops in a day or two," said Lamont, calmly. "The question will be, 'What were you doing under the wall of the prison in company with the English spy?' No answer. Take him out. Shot!"

At the end of this brief summary of his probable fate, Lamont smiled, and appeared resigned.

"Leave us, dear cousin," said Marie. "It is better. We can get along without you now, and you are really in great danger."

"Is it possible? And you actually ask me to go away?"

"And I add my entreaties to hers," said Wilton. "You have done what you could. It is impossible to do more. I thank you from my heart for what you have already done for me, and beg you to go away and leave me to my fate, whatever that may be."

"If I do," said Lamont, "may my sword break in my hand in my next battle, when I meet some wretch that gives no quarter. I stand by you until you cross the river."

"Thanks. But you should consider your position if you are taken."

"I have considered all this," said Lamont, sternly. "Be silent. Would you make me turn coward in this last hour? Let me alone. I have sworn to stand by you and I will keep my word."

"Hush," said Despard. "That spy is getting uneasy. Depend upon it, we shall see his face soon. He will try to get nearer."

It was true. Even as he spoke, the whole body of the man appeared from behind the building, prostrate upon the ground, and he began to crawl slowly toward them. It evidently annoyed him that he could hear nothing of their conversation in the place he had chosen, and he determined to get nearer at all hazards. Foot by foot he drew himself along the ground with his eyes upon the party.

"Keep your face covered, captain," whispered Despard. "He must not know you, of all men. I am satisfied as to myself."

Lamont drew the mask he wore closer over his face and kept back out of sight. The spy had now gained a position from which he could hear any thing they might choose to say. He was disappointed. Not a word was uttered, and he knew nothing of the danger which was approaching him. Not ten feet away, gliding forward with stealthy steps, came the giant form of Wenona, hatchet in hand. Marie held her breath in suspense. Would the chief kill him? So silently did he come on, that the hatchet was lifted above the head of the spy before he was conscious that any one was near him! Before he could raise his head, the ax descended, but not to slay. Wenona suffered the weapon to turn in his hand, so that the side only struck the enemy. But, even that was enough to lay him prostrate, with the blood gushing from his mouth and nose. Wenona had taken care that the fellow should not see him, and as soon as he had brought him and laid him at Despard's feet he glided away to the boat. Despard took a handkerchief and wiped the blood from the face of the man, and looked down.

"Do you know him?" asked Despard

"Ay. He is called Rogue Langlier."

"A desperate ruffian. The same man who attacked us on the road from Chambly, Egbert."

"Ah, ha! Is he dead?"

"No such good luck," said Despard. "If I had known him before I should have allowed the chief to kill him. He is stunned. Wait a moment until I bring him to his senses."

He took some sort of drug from his pocket and held it to the nostrils of the man. In a moment he stirred and began to recover ; but it was only to find a knife at his throat, held by a determined man.

"Curse you ! what do you want ?"

"Keep silent, for your life," replied Despard, in a voice which chilled the very marrow of the spy. "It would take but little to induce me to cut your throat from ear to ear. You were watching us ?"

"Monsieur—"

"Answer the question directly. What do you say ?"

"I was watching you."

"Your object ?"

"To find out who you were, monsieur."

"Did you succeed ?"

"No, monsieur, you were too many for me. Ah, you are careless with that knife. You ought to be more cautious ; you might do me an injury."

"I shall do you one in a moment. Who set you here to watch ?"

"Captain Dujardin."

"Ah ! that young man is everywhere. What was his purpose in placing you here ?"

"He hates the young man who is to die to-morrow, and wanted me to be sure he does not escape, somehow."

"He is very kind," said Wilton. "I do not know how such polite attentions may be returned. Assure him, on my part that I heartily thank him, and will do my best to requite him."

"You are bold, monsieur. Do not carry it too far. You are not yet out of Montreal, and it is a long road to the Chambly."

"Assuredly, Monsieur Langlier ; I know it. If I mistake not, you know something of me. We had a little set-to on that same road of which you speak. Did you like it ?"

"Curse you ! Why do you insult me ? I will yet repay you for that deed ; I give you fair warning."

"The warning is unnecessary, my sweet villain. I am watching you. What reason have you to give why we should not bind you hand and foot, and toss you into the river ?"

" You would not do that, I hope. You would not murder an innocent man ?"

" Innocent ?" cried Wilton.

" Innocent ! Certainly he is as innocent as a baby," said Despard. " By the way, Monsieur Langlier, there is something of which I wish to speak. If you have a good memory, you will know that what I say is true."

" Who are you ?"

" His Satanic Majesty *in propria persona*," replied Despard " Don't interrupt me again, or I will give you cause to think so. Four months ago, a wealthy citizen of this place walked out in the evening. He never came back."

" Such things often happen."

" True ; I am glad to find you a man of judgment. Such things happen too often. Search was made for the man far and wide. He could not be found."

" Ah ! that is sad."

" Was it not ? Upon the night when he disappeared, two men were walking by the river-side, not far from this place. They saw the wealthy individual spoken of—who had ~~some~~ very fine diamonds on his person at that moment—come down to the river-side. He was followed closely by two men, one of whom wore the uniform of a sergeant of musketeers. Do you begin to comprehend me now ?"

The villain was silent ; but they could hear him gasp for breath, as if the charge implied came too suddenly upon him. Despard went on, pitilessly :

" He paused upon the river-bank, in a lovely place, and these villains stole upon him silently. He was looking out upon the river, and waiting for a boat which was to take him to the other side. The gentlemen who watched saw the sergeant raise his sword and thrust the wealthy gentleman through the heart. He died without a groan."

" You lie !" hissed Langlier, in agitated tones ; " you know you lie !"

" Nonsense ! you know I do not. I know the Jew to whom you sold the murdered man's diamonds and rings. I know the man who was your accomplice in the crime, but who never struck a blow. Do you think, after this, that you will make any use of what you have seen to-night ?"

"Monsieur, if I ever speak, hang me for murder," gasped Langlier.

"And so I will. I have the proof. There are few of Dujardin's creatures whom I have not in iron bonds. There; your watching is done for to-night. Go."

"And am I not to know your name?"

"No. Go your way; and if we hear of you again, upon your head be it."

"It seems to me you know every thing," said Lamont. "It is strange."

"Not at all; I make it my business to know these things. Come."

They started for the river, Wilton still holding Marie by the hand. On the point of embarking, they were interrupted in a way they had not looked for. A man came suddenly upon them from the prison, shouting as he came. They recognized the voice of Dujardin. He did not mind their numbers in his furious rage.

"Hold, there! By heaven, you have an escaped prisoner among you. He shall go to prison."

"Lend me a sword," said Wilton, who was the last man of the party. "The rest of you remain in the boat and keep your faces hid. Crouch down, Wenona, or he will know you by your hight."

Without a word of demur, Lamont handed back his sword. Wilton grasped it firmly, and met the madman three paces from the shore.

"You seek me," he said. "Have your wish, then. Ah, there is the moon! We shall have light enough."

The majestic orb of night began to loom above the horizon's rim. Three passes, like lightning flashes, and the sword of Wilton passed through the body of the guilty wretch.

"Confess," said Wilton, with his point still lowered; "who killed D'Arigny?"

"I did!" said the terror-stricken wretch. "I stabbed him to the heart, because he would not speak in my favor to his sister."

"You hear, gentlemen: the villain confesses. Leave him where he lies."

The boat pushed off into the river, no one waiting to see whether the wound was mortal. The face of Wilton wore a lofty look. He had cleared his character in the eyes of the world, as well as in those of the woman he loved. Lamont moved, so as to allow Marie to sit near her lover. The volatile partisan took pleasure in bringing these two noble hearts together.

"Disposed of neatly," said he, and after that, said not a word, but bent to his oar with all his strength. In a short time they reached the other side of the stream, and were soon grouped upon the bank.

"The path is before you," said Lamont. "Wenona goes with you to the Chambly. His presence will do you a world of good. My friend, let me take your hand. You cheated me, but you wear a heavenly sword, and that atones for all. A word more: what sort of a gun is that you had at the castle?"

"Simply an air-gun. It is not of much service, but does very well to frighten people."

"I don't know the principle, but I mean to study it out. You made it yourself, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Let us have short leave-takings. Once more, good-by. Despard, you go back with us?"

"I do. I only came to save my friend, as you did. Good-by, Wilton," he added, pressing the hand of the young man, and at the same time slipping into it a folded paper. It was the plan of the French campaign.

Wilton took Marie by the hand and led her aside.

"I can not ask *you* to go with me, my darling. I would not be so cruel as to ask you to share the perils of the way. We are both young, and can afford to wait. Will you give me your promise to wait for me until I come, or until you know that I am dead?"

Her only reply was a kiss. He understood her. She would be true to him unto death. A way was arranged by which he might write to her, and they parted. Many battles must be fought, many hours of suffering pass, before either could hope to see the other's face again.

"Silent Slayer," said Wenona, pausing as they were about

to turn into the forest-path toward the Chambly, "you see before you one who has fought the battles of France. But, higher than his love for France is the love of Wenona for Lamont. I will see you safe to the lake."

Wilton only answered by a look of gratitude. He knew that the road over which they must pass was full of danger, and that only in the chief he could safely trust. The warrior took the lead; Mick O'Toole followed close behind, and next to him came Wilton.

"Indians are in the woods," said Wenona. "Good Indian sometimes; other times bad Indian. But who among them does not know the face of Wenona, the Giant Chief?"

Wilton glanced admiringly at his stalwart frame and sinewy arms, as he stretched them forth in conscious pride of his strength. But he said nothing. He knew that it is in the nature of an Indian to be a little boastful and vain, and he did not expect any thing else.

As they strode along, ominous sounds attended their progress, which verified the chief's assertion that Indians were in the woods. Wenona erected his head and looked suspiciously about him. He knew the signs of the wood, perhaps, as well as any man under its canopy. He had made it his home. He had trod its wilds at all hours, and slept under its sheltering boughs.

"Hist!" he said, pausing after a little. "Indians are in the path."

They halted a moment, and could hear stealthy footfalls, closing in on the path in every direction. Turning on his heel, the chief signed to them to follow him, and ran lightly back several rods, plunging into an obscure path which seemed to lead into the deeper recesses of the forest. He reached a place at last where a low pine grew, whose sweeping branches touched the ground on every side. Lifting a branch, he intimated by a gesture that they were to go under it.

"And you?" said Wilton.

The chief stamped impatiently, and seeing that he was decided, Wilton entered and was followed by Mick. Once under the boughs, the Indian dropped the branch he had raised, and they were completely shut in. A neater hiding-place probably could not have been found in the woods; and what

made it more secure was the fact that hundreds of similar trees were thickly crowded about the spot, and it must be by a lucky accident that an Indian should find the particular tree under which they were concealed. They heard the rapid footsteps of Wenona recede, and felt that, for the present, they must depend upon themselves. Wilton was a cool and hardy man, and had been in greater danger than this, and Mick looked upon it with utter indifference, in the absence of any immediate cause for alarm.

"Masther dear," he whispered, "I don't think the bla'guards c'u'd find this place at all, at all."

"You don't want them to find it, I should hope."

"I'm afeard they won't."

"Why, you diabolical Irishman; do you want to get caught?"

"Sure, I dunno, masther dear. Ye've been havin' all the fun til yersilf in Montreal, an' now ye go about grudgin' me a bit av a row. That's not fair."

"I never saw such a fellow as you in my life," muttered Wilton. "Silence for your life! Here they come!"

As he spoke, an Indian appeared at a turn in the forest-path, and took a cautious survey of the ground. The men, lying hidden under the slanting boughs, were silent enough now, for, close behind the first Indian they could see the fierce faces of half a dozen more. They were evidently at a loss how to proceed. The hidden men were not the sort to leave a broad trail, and even the slight one they left had been carefully obliterated by the chief before he departed.

Wilton laid his hand upon the arm of the Irishman, to enjoin him to silence. He feared some outbreak on his part, and with the utmost difficulty restrained him, for in the savage who led, the Irishman recognized one of the foremost of his pursuers on the day when the scouts were first introduced to the reader. He satisfied his conscience, in the absence of speaking, by shaking his fist at the unconscious Indian.

There was a little opening near the tree under which they lay. The Indians gathered here and began to converse in rather loud voices for Indians. They were nearly all young warriors, unaccustomed to the trail.

"Dujardin is wounded nearly unto death," said the leader, speaking in the Indian tongue. "His blood soaks into the ground. The friend of the St. Regis must not die unrevenged."

"He shall not," said one of the young warriors boastfully. "I am the Red Fox of the St. Regis. I will follow the Silent Slayer and the Redhead to their death."

"Good. Where are they?"

"They have hid underground like foxes," said the Red Fox; "but I am more cunning than they. Where they can go, I can follow. Red Fox will be a chief."

"A chief does not talk so much," said the leader, doubtfully. "His are acts, not words. Beware that the Silent Slayer does not get you within reach of the gun which slays but makes no sound."

Several of the younger Indians glanced about them in considerable trepidation. They evidently did not care to be too near to a man who had the reputation of having a gun which could kill without noise. They remembered the experience of Bend-the-Bow and Sleep-by-Day, who had suffered from this mysterious arm.

"Remember that Dujardin promised to make us rich in powder and blankets," said the leader. "We will yet take the Silent Slayer and the Redhead and burn them with fire. Scatter and search the woods. They lie concealed somewhere, and we must find them."

The band scattered in various directions, and searched for the trail. Several of the principal ones had followed the trail intentionally left by the chief. They passed away, and the place again became silent. Mick was about to lift the bough and go out, when he saw one of the savages stealing back with cautious steps. It was the boasting fellow, who had called himself Red Fox.

Mick drew in his head as quickly as Langlier had done that day, when hiding behind the wall of the prison.

The Indian evidently had an object in coming back alone. He really was an acute fellow, thirsting for distinction, and hoped to be able to take the glory of the discovery of the Silent Slayer, if not his capture, to himself.

What was it which had roused his suspicion?

A simple thing in itself, but sufficient, in the mind of an Indian, to awaken suspicion. In lifting the bough and allowing it to drop back upon the ground, a heap of leaves had been disarranged slightly. Not to any great degree, but still enough to catch the Indian's eye.

He was satisfied that something had passed under the tree. Still it might not have been a human being. A bear or deer or wolf might have done it.

He approached the tree carefully, scanning it on every side. His object in coming back alone was twofold ; besides the credit he could assume to himself, as we have said, if his suspicions were just, he could shield himself from the ridicule of his companions if they were false.

Wilton saw at a glance that they were now in the greatest danger of that perilous week. A single cry from the Indian would bring down upon them the red scoundrels who pursued them, thirsting for their blood. He made ready for his work ; but Mick touched him on the arm and showed him that by retreating to the other side of the tree, it would be impossible, unless the Indian entered, to see them. Wilton slipped out of sight. A moment after the savage pushed aside the branches and looked in.

He saw nothing and began to think that he had been deceived, and was glad that he had come back alone. However he determined to be sure, and so drew his whole body in.

Wilton threw himself upon the Red Fox, and bore him to the earth before he could utter a cry. The fingers of the young partisan had closed upon his throat in a vice-like grasp. The eyes of the young savage were protruding from their sockets and his tongue lolling out of his mouth, when Wilton remembered that, though an Indian, he was a St. Regis, and one of the party of the chief himself. Under the circumstances, he determined to spare him. Kept quiet by the gentle persuasion of a knife at his throat, the Indian suffered himself to be bound hand and foot.

The glory of the capture of the Silent Slayer was growing "small by degrees and beautifully less" in his mind's eye. The poor fellow stared helplessly at his captors, and evidently regretted that he had suffered himself to be led away by his desire for glory.

Mick took off the hunting-shirt of the savage, cut it into strips and made a rope with which he tied the Red Fox to the body of the tree in such a position that it was impossible for him to get away. He grinned hopelessly at Mick, who was about to gag him.

"Good fellow, Redhead," he said. "Like a poor Indian."

"Like 'em," growled Mick. "You want me to cut you in two?"

"Brudder," said Red Fox. "Redhead—Red Fox. All same."

"Ye baste! D'ye mane to till me that I'm just the same as ye? Arrah, bad scran til ye! I'll bate yer hide till it's ridder than my head. Take the bit in yer mout' ye baste! Don't ye kick ag'in it now. Take the bit."

Red Fox suffered the gag to be put into his jaws, though obviously under the impression that he was to be scalped directly afterward. But, when he was securely anchored, they paid no further attention to him, but sat down serenely to wait for the coming of the chief. Some hours passed, and the Indians came trooping back. They had missed their companion, and had not been able to strike the trail of the fugitives. An angry frown showed itself on the face of the leader.

"You are children," he said. "If the St. Regis must send their women upon the war-trail, they should not send them out with men. Did you see any thing, Moose?"

The savage shook his head. None of the others had been more lucky, and hung their heads in shame. The captive under the tree became restive. Wilton was lying prone upon him, with his knife at his throat, but even then he showed a desire to give his friends notice of his presence. But he dared not, with death so near. As the Indians stood looking stupidly about them, Wenona suddenly appeared on the path, regarding them with an angry eye.

"What do the children of the St. Regis here, without the order of their chief? Speak, Reed-that-Bends. Are you the leader?"

"The chief was not in Montreal, and Dujardin was nearly

slain. He is the friend of the St. Regis, and shall we not avenge him?"

"Are the men of the St. Regis nothing but hounds, to hunt the game of the Frenchmen? Reed-that-Bends, for a few blankets, would sell the honor of his nation."

"What would the chief have us do? The Silent Slayer is in the woods. He has slain some of our best men."

"You seek the Silent Slayer. You are brave men to search for one who knows the way of the woods."

"What would you have us do, then?" said Reed-that-Bends, angrily.

"Return to Montreal, and be no longer the hound of the Frenchmen. When you go forth to battle, Wenona will lead you; but go no more when such men as Dujardin bid you. He is not the friend of the St. Regis, for he is a man who slays his enemy by a stab in the back."

"But where is the Red Fox? Shall we not find him?"

"Is the Red Fox a fool, to lose his way in the woods? No. Return to Montreal, where I will come to you."

The Indians trooped away. When satisfied that they were gone, Wilton slipped out from the hiding-place, and signed to the chief not to speak, and led him aside, where he explained to him the position of the Red Fox.

It will do to say that Wenona released the Red Fox on his return, and manifested surprise at finding him.

The Giant Chief accompanied the two men to the Chambly, then helped them in the canoe to the banks of Champlain, no further interruption to their journey having occurred.

"Silent Slayer," said he, "we part here. When we meet we are enemies, because you fight with the Yengees, whom Wenona hates. Wenona and the St. Regis fight for the French. But, I promised to see you safe to the lake, and a great chief keeps his word. Farewell."

The canoe shot out into the lake, and left the noble savage standing on the point, like a statue of a giant in bronze. There he stood until the canoe faded from sight.

Mariot Dujardin did not die from his wounds. He was found upon the river-bank and the surgeon saved his life. Those who had heard his confession dared not speak of it,

because by so doing they would imperil the lives of all who assisted the Silent Slayer in his escape.

"Let him alone," said Marie, in a conversation with Lamont. "God will punish such a villain; but his time is not yet."

The Silent Slayer reached the English lines in safety. Few knew what ties he had to bind him to Montreal, or why he was so eager for an invasion of Canada. When the time came—as come it did—and the brave scout was happy in the love of Marie his wedded wife, he was more than repaid for the sufferings he had undergone.

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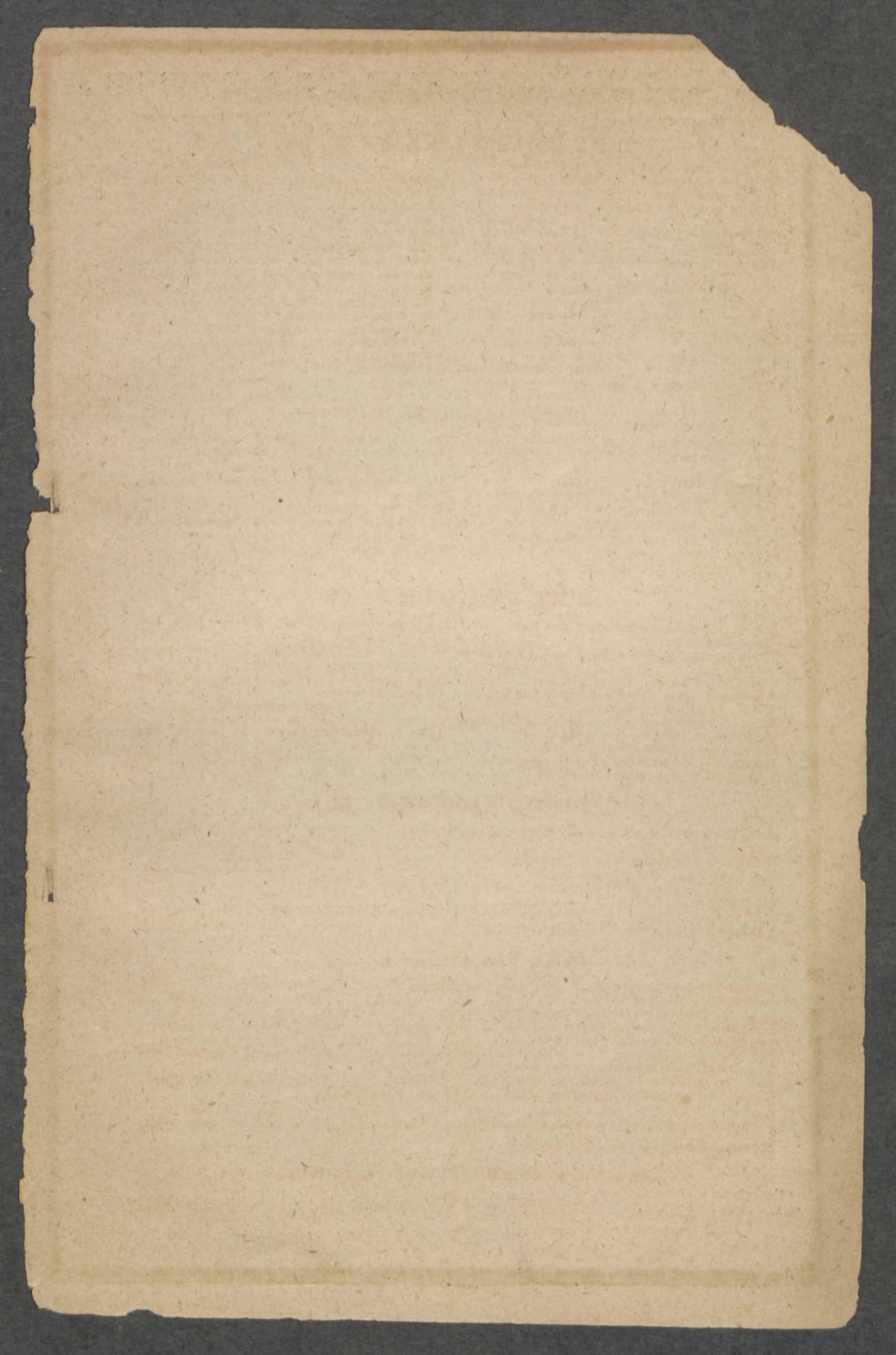
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